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NORTHERN MYTHOLOGY

By

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NORTHERN MYTHOLOGY

BY·FRIEDRICH KAUFFMANN

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TRANSLATOR'S PREFACE

PROFESSOR KAUFFMANN'S little book on *Deutsche Mythologie* gives a brief sketch of Germanic mythology. It therefore treats of the primitive beliefs of the various Germanic peoples, including those of our own ancestors as well as of the Scandinavians and the Goths. But it is only in Scandinavian literature that we have any detailed accounts of pre-Christian faiths, and though these records are often later and less authentic than the scanty references which we find here and there among other Germanic peoples, they will, nevertheless, always remain the chief source of our knowledge on the subject. Since, therefore, Old Norse literature has necessarily supplied the greater part of the subject-matter, I have ventured to change the title of the primer and call it "Northern Mythology," as probably conveying to English readers a more accurate conception of the scope of the book than the more literal equivalent of the German title would have done.

I wish also to apologize for the use of "Teutonic" and "Teutons," which I have used in the text to trans-

late *Germanisch* and *Germanen*, partly as a concession to popular usage and partly for the convenience of rendering the constantly recurring *die Germanen* by "the Teutons" instead of by "the Germanic peoples." But I am aware that "Germanic" is gaining favour among scholars.

The word "Lays" has been used to translate the German *Lieder* in order to make clear that in every case the reference is to the sagas contained in the *Elder* or *Poetic Edda*. These lays date from the eighth or ninth century, and had, therefore, long existed in oral tradition before they were collected and written down in the twelfth or thirteenth century (Bugge thinks about 1240). Occasional reference is also made to the *Younger* or *Prose Edda*, which was composed (or edited?) by Snorri Sturlason in the first half of the thirteenth century. The *Eddas* are by far the most important works for the study of Old Norse mythology, but there are also a number of prose sagas which incidentally throw light on the subject.

With regard to the form in which the proper names are reproduced, I have preferred, in the majority of cases, to retain the Old Norse spelling when the names are known to us only from Scandinavian sources—where Anglo-Saxon equivalents exist, as in Woden, Thunor (Þunor), Tiw, they have been used by the side of the Old Norse forms. In names so well known as Odin and Thor it would be pedantry to insist on the exclusive use of Óðinn and Þórr. In the same way, the Old

Norse spellings *Æsir* and *Vanir* have been kept, though the authority of other English translators justifies the use of an astonishing variety of forms such as *âsa*, *ases*, *asen*, *asas*, *anses* ; *wanes* and *wane-gods*.

May I say, in conclusion, that if this little translation arouses sufficient interest in the old Norse gods and heroes to induce only a few readers to explore for themselves the treasure-house of myth and story contained in the *Eddas* and the Old Norse sagas, it will have amply justified its existence.

M. STEELE SMITH.

NEWNHAM COLLEGE, CAMBRIDGE,
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ABBREVIATIONS

Ags. = Anglo-Saxon, denotes the language of the Angles, Saxons, and Frisians who had migrated to Britain down to the time of William the Conqueror.

O.S. = Old Saxon, denotes the language of Lower Germany during the first half of the Middle Ages.

O.H.G. = Old High German, denotes the language of Middle and Upper Germany during the first half of the Middle Ages.

Fris. = Frisian, denotes the language of the Frisians in the Middle Ages.

O.N. = Old Norse, denotes the language of the inhabitants of Scandinavia in the Middle Ages.

Goth. = Gothic, denotes the language (dead) of the Goths.

Teut. = Teutonic, denotes the hypothetical parent speech of all Teutonic peoples.

Lat. = Latin.

etymol. = etymologically.

pl. = plural.

PRONUNCIATION

' ^	over a vowel denotes length.
h	before r, l, n, w is pronounced like German *ch*.
þ	is pronounced like *th* in bath.
ð	is pronounced like *th* in bathe.
ȝ	denotes a sound intermediate between English *y* and German *ch*.
œ	is pronounced like *e* in there.
ǫ́	is pronounced like *aw* in law; ǫ has the same value, but is short.
ö	is pronounced like German ö or French *eu*.

NORTHERN MYTHOLOGY

The Decline of Teutonic Paganism.

Two boys were at play by the side of a stream. A merman was sitting on the bank and playing on a harp. The children called to him, "Why do you sit there and play, merman? You know you will never be saved." Then the merman began to weep bitterly, threw down his harp, and disappeared under the water. When the boys went home they told their father, who was a clergyman, what had happened. The clergyman said, "You have done the merman a wrong; go back, comfort him, and tell him that even he may be saved." When they returned to the stream the merman was sitting on the bank weeping sadly. The children said, "Do not cry so, merman, our father says that you have a Saviour too." Then the merman took his harp and played sweetly till long after sunset.

No other saga, Jacob Grimm thinks, tells so significantly what a deep and firm hold Christianity has taken on the heart of the people. And yet how warm and tender a regard it preserves for the old heathen sprites; a regard warm enough to admit them to a share in the blessings of the new life. The new religion permeates all the forms, language, and thought of poetry. In the minstrel poetry of the Middle Ages the dwarf Alberich, who plays the harp with wonderful skill (*cf.* M.H.G. *albleich* = song and dance of the elves), bids the

hero spare the heathen and let them be baptized. In spite of the tradition that giants and dwarfs do not believe in God, we find the old heathen sprite changed by the minstrel into an angel of God, or the piety of giants expressly asserted (as in King Rother). A reverse fate befell the Christianized Roman Emperors who were placed by the Roman Senate among the heathen gods of Olympus.

The old beliefs of heathen ancestors coalesce imperceptibly with Christian ideas brought from foreign lands. Christianity had been accepted willingly and peaceably by the Teutons. Towards the Roman priests and bishops they showed the same open-mindedness which ever characterized their dealings with foreigners. Their confidence in the new faith increased still further when fellow-countrymen or kindred tribes rose up against heathen gods and heathen customs. It was chiefly through Teutonic peoples that Christianity was directly or indirectly imparted to the Teutons—not without some vigorous German blows, it is true, and often German soil was stained with blood; but the victims were few when compared to the scenes of horror throughout the length and breadth of the Roman Empire which attended the conversion of the Latin races to Christianity. Nothing was so sacred to the Teuton as the preservation of the laws and customs which regulated and safeguarded the daily life of the community. Freedom of belief prevailed in all Teutonic lands; religious coercion was unknown in the Teutonic state. Not until the ordinances and public institutions of the people were endangered did the Teuton take up arms, and he submitted only to superior odds. The missionaries of the Church had the wisdom to avoid radical measures as far as possible at first, and showed respect for heathen traditions, in so far as they did not directly clash with the teaching

of the Church, provided that the converts, who had been baptized in the name of God, promised to be faithful to the Saviour, and learned to repeat the crede and paternoster after the priest, and to respond to his chanting with *Kyrie eleison*. Thus it was that during the first centuries of the Christian era heathen and Christian conceptions were strangely mingled in the minds of the people, and the most glaring incongruities prevailed, until the legislation of the Empire and of the various districts imposed severe penalties upon the ancient heathen practices. In this way the axe was laid at the very root of paganism.

The traces of heathen beliefs were scattered far and wide over the globe by the stream of migrating nations. Hardly a vestige is to be found to-day embedded in Teutonic soil. We have to go far back in history if we would find the landmarks which yet bear unobliterated the impress of paganism. The *Nibelungenlied* and kindred poems, containing stories of the German heroes, are the best authorities for the last remnants of German antiquity.[1] Even among Christianized Teutons a residuum of heathen traditions was preserved as in other nations, but the absence of written records makes it excessively difficult to identify them, and one must beware of drawing inferences about the earlier paganism of the Teutons from the conditions which existed in Christian times. It is important to remember that with the introduction of Christianity Greek and Roman influences made themselves felt.

The conversion of the Teutons began with the tribes dwelling in the extreme East—the Goths, Gepidæ, Vandals, Herulians, Rugii. As early as the end of the second and beginning of the third century, hordes of Goths from the Lower Danube had invaded the

[1] K. Müllenhoff.

southern civilized world. In their incursions into the Christian provinces of Asia Minor they carried back with them adherents to the Christian faith. It was to a Christian family in Asia Minor that the first bishop of the Goths belonged, the venerable Wulfila (*c.* 311-383), who trained a small West Gothic colony in the Balkans in Christian knowledge, and translated the Scriptures into their native tongue for them. Jordanes, the historian of the Goths, states expressly that the Gospel was carried by the West Goths to the other East Teutonic peoples: missionaries from his own tribe won over the kindred races to the new doctrine. The form of belief professed by Wulfila and his disciples was Arianism. His teaching was long followed by the Vandals in Africa, the Goths in Spain and Southern France (and later, through their influence, by the Burgundians), by the Suevi in Spain, the Langobards in Italy, as well as by remnants of related tribes which had remained in the south-east corner of the Germany of to-day. It was here, in the province of Salzburg, among Arian Rugii, that Severinus preached with such convincing power, and before whose impressive personality the wild hearts of savage German chieftains quailed. About the same time Chlodvig (or Clovis), king of the Franks, bowed before the Cross and was baptized on Christmas Day, 496 The magnates of the Romish Church were exultant when, in spite of the endeavours of the neighbouring Arian West Goths, the king declared himself in favour of the Catholic faith of his teacher Vedastas.

A century later the Pope of Rome, at that time Gregory I., made a systematic attempt to convert the Teutons, and sent his messengers to Britain, which had been colonized by German tribes (Anglo-Saxons). The Gospel first took foothold in Kent, and there Augustine received instructions from Gregory I. as to the method of

conversion. The Pope forbade the destruction of heathen temples, but the idols inside them must be destroyed, the walls sprinkled with holy water, altars built, relics enshrined, and then the same buildings might be used as Christian churches. The people were in future to resort to their wonted sanctuaries; the feast-days for offering sacrifices should be changed to festivals in honour of the saints, and were to be kept with eating and drinking and joyful thanksgiving to God. The Pope recognized the impossibility of depriving the heathen of everything at once, and therefore recommended a gradual advance, step by step. The conflict between national customs and ecclesiastical ordinances caused the clergy in England to avoid the introduction of public penances. It was repugnant to the national sense of justice and freedom to humiliate the penitent publicly before the congregation by making him cut off his hair and lay aside the weapons which were the pride and glory of the free-born German. The severities of Church rule were tempered out of deference to inherited predilections till the haughty independence of the Teutons should have been prepared by other means to receive Christian doctrine and discipline. Long before they were brought into contact with Christianity the Teutons had attained independently to a stage of civilization which was capable of resisting encroachments and of inspiring respect. General principles for the ordering of conduct (*praecepta moralia quae ad honestatem pertinent*) were held by many, and found expression in the high value attached to nobility of character. The ancient Germans were no longer the barbarians which we commonly picture them.

The consorts of the kings of the country were easily won over to Christian piety. With Kent as the centre, Christianity spread in ever-widening circles. In little over fifty years Christian institutions had been

established in the several Anglo-Saxon kingdoms. The change was not effected everywhere in the same serious spirit with which it was undertaken by Edwin, king of the Northumbrians, who had won experience from a chequered life. Grave consultations with his officials convinced him that the Christian faith was able to supply a more satisfactory answer to the problems which perplexed his soul than the philosophy which had hitherto been his. He no longer resisted when the heathen chief priest himself transgressed the heathen commandments and set fire to the temples. It is true that the bishop of the queen had previously used the king's innermost secrets for his own purposes, and it seems that the monarch, whose grave and trustful heart would never have suspected such a cunning deception, remained all his life in ignorance of the priest's pious fraud.

The native clergy in England soon became the most obedient tool of the Pope, who henceforward had the conversion of the Teutons much at heart. Missionaries were now despatched, chiefly from England, to the German tribes on the mainland, the Frisians, Franks, Alemanni, Bavarians, Saxons. But all did not go on as smoothly as Rome would have liked. Certain opposing currents, stirred up by the zealous and successful efforts of the so-called Scotch monks, ran counter to the papal authority. These unassuming Celtic emissaries from Britain promulgated the heretical doctrines which had grown up independently of Rome in their native land, and everywhere they and their converts opposed the messengers of the Pope. The religious fervour of a St. Boniface was needed to counteract their teaching. In 716 he landed for the first time on Frisian soil. In 722 he began to preach in Hessia, in 723 in Thuringia (also tentatively in Saxony), with great success. Shortly after 735 he succeeded in bringing the extraordinarily chaotic

conditions under hierarchic rule. His chief care, however, was Franconia, of which it was said at the time that faith, indeed, was to be found there, but alas, not a trace of works! It was Boniface who organized the ecclesiastical life, and by upholding monkhood, fostered the growth of religious knowledge. Inspired by the purest motives, he toiled with noble self-sacrifice, and reaped nothing but ingratitude. Weary of life he returned once more to the heathen Frisians, and on June 5, 755, found under the strokes of their axes the martyr's death which he looked for. A yet greater followed him. Charles the Great had recourse to legislation in his systematic attempt to convert the Germans into a Christian nation, to win a place for Christian usages in house and home, and so realize his ideal of a Christian state. Filled with this idea, he made every effort to storm the heathen fastnesses in Saxony which had hitherto offered such persistent resistance. In the very first campaign, planned at the Diet of Worms in 772, he had the sacred forest with the Irmensul[1] burned down, and distributed his numerous retinue of clergy throughout the Saxon lands; nevertheless no memorable success was gained till 785, when Witikind submitted to be baptized.

About the same time, at the Diet of Paderborn, those bloody decrees were enacted which were necessary for the rapid and permanent introduction of Church discipline into a heathen country. It was decreed by law that identical, nay, even greater honour, should be paid to the Christian God than to the heathen gods; the people were forbidden to offer sacrifices, to partake of meat-offerings, to burn the dead, and, in short, to observe heathen rites and customs any longer. Capital punishment was the lot of the transgressor; *morte moriatur* recurs as a gloomy refrain to numerous paragraphs in the laws. Thanks to

[1] A mysterious column held in deepest veneration by the Saxons.

those drastic measures the work of evangelization spread under Lewis the Pious from Hamburg to Schleswig and Jutland, and thence as far as Denmark and Sweden.

The right man for these daring undertakings had been discovered in the monastery of Corvey. It was from Corvey that the Emperor summoned the monk Ansgarius to his court, and entrusted him with full powers as missionary to the north. With Ansgarius's name are associated all the advances made by Christianity north of the Eider up to the time of his death in 865. Rimbert, his disciple and companion, to whom we owe Ansgarius's biography, carried on the work energetically. But in the beginning of the tenth century the work of conversion came to a standstill. Apparently only so much of Christianity survived in the northern kingdoms at that time as prevented its becoming extinct. Denmark, it is true, soon appointed native missionaries; but a new impetus was first given under King Canute, who, like Charles the Great before him, sought to realize the ideal of a Christian ruler. The main part in mission-work was now undertaken by the English. It was in Sweden that the mass of the people remained most obstinately heathen. There, as late as the eleventh century, the great temple of Upsala still stood in all its splendour, with the evergreen tree and the mysterious sacrificial well, into which the bodies of the slain were lowered. Every nine years a great sacrificial festival was held there. Adam of Bremen relates that his informant had seen close to the temple a sacred grove on the trees of which men, dogs, and horses, to the number of seventy-two, had been hanged as sacrifices. The references to the persistence of paganism in Sweden are as late as the thirteenth century.

In the west of Scandinavia the mission, which was mainly carried on by England, was more successful. Hakon,

the son of Harold Fairhair, had been brought up and baptized in England; and through him the Anglo-Saxon Church had been brought into touch with Norway. But the zealous efforts of the king for the propagation of Christianity proved premature. It was not till the accession of Olaf Tryggvason (995), who also had been baptized in England in 993, that a powerful resistance was made to heathenism, and district after district compelled to submit to the Christian religion. In view of the obvious lack of clergy, conversion in the strict sense of the term was out of the question. In the remote mountain districts sacrifices were still offered as of old to the ancient deities of the land. And, when Olaf's short life ended in the year 1000, Christianity suffered a relapse, and once more every one was at liberty to believe what he liked. This condition of things was terminated by Olaf the Saint when in 1014 he left England and suddenly appeared on his native shore. By his implacable severity he compelled all his people to promise to keep the Christian commandments. They even resolved in 1031 to canonize the king, who had died shortly before, and keep his birthday every year as that of a national saint.

In the meantime Iceland, in spite of its remoteness, had been repeatedly visited by missionaries, and had forsaken its heathen beliefs. In the year 1000 Olaf had sent an embassy to the island to work in the interests of Christianity. A great popular assembly was just being held as the men landed. But for the intervention of the more sober-minded section of the heathen, a bloody encounter would have immediately ensued. This was avoided. On the following day the Law-giver of the island made a patriotic speech, in which he advocated the peaceful acceptance of Christianity in the interest of civic unity. Let us, he admonished, remain together as one people, all under one law and one religion. Let every

one in Iceland, great and small, be baptized; let the ancient laws of Iceland remain in force in so far as they do not clash with Christianity. The politic prudence of the Law-giver (whose name was *Þorgeirr*) succeeded in inaugurating a change in the old manner of life without violence and without recoil. The Teuton was ready to sacrifice even his religion in order to maintain the existence of the state, the community, and the individual. We do not hear of martyrs to their faith in German pagan lands; only isolated cases are recorded in which loyalty to the old gods was unflinching even to death: we look in vain for a figure of tragic grandeur. Th. Mommsen's incidental remark on the religion of the ancient Romans is also true of the Teutons; their piety was nothing but patriotism manifested in ritualistic form. Conversion to Christianity was much more a matter of policy than of religious conviction. The strength of heathenism lay in the veneration for the usages of the land which their fathers had observed before them, in the sense of community which united members of the family and of the tribe, both living and dead. Religion did not exert the deep and active influence on thought and action which we perceive in more modern times. The strength of antiquity lay in the union of political and religious interests; there was no gulf fixed between religious faith and the conceptions of a secular civilization. Such a distinction is foreign to ancient modes of thought.

The Gods.

Many ancient religious conceptions and names were common to the Teuton, and to kindred peoples in Asia and Europe. Doubtless he brought them with him from his original home, if we may assume that the same names

represent the same ideas. The vicissitudes of the nation in the course of its history, its migrations in the dim and distant past, the events which befell it as a settled people, also left a sediment in mythology. Religion changes with civilization. Whilst the hordes were in motion, whilst the constellations seen in the star-lit heavens changed year by year, the blessings desired by the nomads from their gods were other than those which had been solicited in the earlier period when the family owned safe dwelling-places in the ancestral settlement, and common interests united individuals in a community. Probably from this earlier period dates the close and intimate connection of the deities with the public life of the Teutons. If war and love of war seem to be the prevailing element of this public life from the first appearance of the Teutons in history, do not we seem to hear the heart-beats of the period in myth and saga, seeing it is ever a warrior's ideal which gives fire to the minstrel's song? Then follows the period of the so-called migration of peoples, the beginnings of which reach back into pre-Christian centuries. The typical Teutonic hero, as we like to imagine him, took shape in this period. There is no doubt that it was in the long centuries of the migrations that the Teutons developed their national characteristics, and we shall not be wrong in regarding our general conception of Teutonic pagan divinities as the reflex of Teutonic civilization in those formative years of wandering.[1]

There is much that is older. The veneration of gods conceived as persons is to be found in the mythology of the Indo-Germanic parent race. Apparently *Źiu* is etymologically the same as Old Indian *Dyāus*, the Greek Διεύς = Ζεύς, the Roman *Jupiter* (Gen. *Jovis* from *Diovis*). The term used by the Scandinavians to denote the gods collectively, nom. pl. *tívar*, corresponds exactly

[1] Cp. *Deutsche Altertumskunde* (Sammlung Göschen).

to the Latin *divus*, Old Indian *devas*, Lithuanian *dëvas*, Old Irish *dia*. Our old German word "God" is probably cognate to the Old Indian adjective *ghoras* = terrible, awe-inspiring, venerable, which occurs as an attribute of the gods in the Veda. These words seem to throw light upon the relation of the Indo-Germanic worshipper to his divinity. He regarded it as a being whose power he feared, whose aid he reverently solicited. Tacitus can still say of the Teutons of his time: *Deorum nominibus appellant secretum illud, quod sola reverentia vident.* Cæsar mentions the *dii immortales* of the Teutons; but he is entirely in the wrong when he states that the Germans only worshipped what they could see and what was of material use, such as sun, moon, and fire. The worship of gods is always distinct from nature-worship; the very conception of deity presupposes a certain moral element. Tacitus, who was much better informed, enumerates a series of German gods whose Roman names only thinly disguise their Teutonic originals. Even he had realized that the Germans believed their national origin to be closely connected with their gods.

The gods (of both sexes) were regarded as the supreme rulers of the world, as we see from the Scandinavian word *rögn, regin*, which also occurs in the Old Saxon dialect, and is preserved in an older form in Gothic as *ragin* (= decision) and the derivatives *ragineis* (= counsellor), and *raginôn* (= to rule), and is etymologically related to Greek ἄρχων. The same supreme authority of the gods is expressed in the Old Norse, Old Saxon, and Anglo-Saxon word, *metod meotod*, which signifies "judge." Another name for the gods is found in Gothic and Scandinavian, and may be etymologically connected with Old Persian *anhu* = Lat. *esus, herus* (= lord); viz. Goth. *ansis*, Old Norse *æsir* (= the gods); in Anglo-Saxon and Old Frisian we have the same word, nom. pl. *ése*,

and in the Old High German names *Anshelm*, *Anshild*, &c. In Scandinavian a feminine has been formed, *ásynjur* (= goddesses), whilst in the other Teutonic languages there are no special names to denote goddesses, except O.H.G. *gutin*, Ags. *ȝyden* (= goddess). It is significant that the word god was originally of neuter gender, to include masculine and feminine. It is noteworthy that in Scandinavian poems the gods are sometimes called *bǫnd*, *hǫpt* (= bonds, fetters).

Latin traditions sometimes allude to the heathen gods as a *collegium* or *senatus divinus*, in the same way that old songs tell how the gods ride to their tribunals after the manner of earthly rulers in order to take council and pass decrees on worldly matters of import. Their dwellings are all close together in heaven, protected by a mighty wall; the country is called *Ásgarðr* (abode of the gods). There was besides, as the lays of the Edda tell, a different and separate world called *Vanaheimr* (world of the Vanir). Isolated Vanir had been received among the Aesir after the latter had waged war against them; at its close peace had been concluded, and some kind of connection established between the two classes of gods by marriage and treaty. Old Norse *Vanir* signifies the Shining Ones or the Friendly Ones (perhaps related to Lat. *Venus?*); the adj. *wanum* is frequently used in the Heliand of pleasing effects of light. The wisdom of the Vanir is emphasized, but they do not seem to have shared the merry pastimes of the Aesir or to have enjoyed the same degree of veneration. The Vanir also appear to have been adepts in magic. Their name is found only among the northern Teutons. But there is nothing in their character to contradict the assumption that they were also known among the South Germans.

There is no doubt that the rich stores of mythological tradition preserved in Scandinavia, primarily in the

so-called Lays of the Edda, ought not to be regarded as giving an exact picture of German religious beliefs. Neither is the Edda the embodiment of the religious conceptions of northern paganism, but it is rather the poetic treatment of a mythological subject which bears the strong impress of its northern home and from which is omitted all that did not lend itself to artistic representation. We are given no information as to the worship of the gods, religious rites, sacrifices, &c.

What is generally termed northern mythology is little more than a presentment of poetical subject-matter, and has little or nothing to do with religion. It is not right to explain "mythology" as "the religion of the upper classes": the myths represent Teutonic religious beliefs as little as the essentially identical legends and short stories of the Christian Middle Ages. Religious doctrine cannot be formulated from myths any more than from legends, although the favourite but entirely erroneous method of investigating the religion of a people is to take the legends of its gods as a starting-point. Reliable information as to genuine religious beliefs is very scanty; many of the myths of the Edda date from the last century before the introduction of Christianity, and are the conscious efforts of imaginative poets whose work represents a unique product of the Scandinavian North, the outcome of its natural conditions and its history. And, we repeat, the beliefs of the Scandinavian peoples must not be taken as the exclusive standard by which to estimate the religion of the Teutons. But the further we investigate the mythology of our own more immediate ancestors and the country from which they came, the more inadequate appears the information to be gained within these limits. Our horizon must include all those nations which are shown by kinship of speech to be members of the great Teutonic parent-race. Among

these the peoples of the Scandinavian North occupy the most important place, and much that is fragmentary and partially obliterated elsewhere appears fuller and plainer in their records.

Nevertheless the most scrupulous care is needed in handling the materials at our disposal. In the first place, popular superstitions and popular customs of to-day in many instances owe their preservation to their connection with Christianity, and on this account we shall confine ourselves in the following pages as much as possible to the mythology of pagan antiquity as known to us from the literary records and Roman-Teutonic inscriptions of the first centuries. Recent investigators have, however, pointed out that even these ancient sources have been contaminated by Christian influence. Although this may not have taken place to the extent which has been assumed, the fact cannot be doubted. It must be remembered further that the deities of northern poetry are in many cases allegorical, embodiments of what had a real existence in the poet's experience, but which he was loth to put into naked words and concrete forms. Short poetical stories form the chief source of our knowledge. Such poetry is chivalrous, aristocratic. Rarely do we hear of what touches the mass of the people. The plastic luxuriance of the northern poet's imagination is well known. His eye was fixed on the mountains till the snowy peaks assumed human features and the giant of the rock or the ice descended with heavy tread; or he would gaze at the splendour of the spring or of the summer fields, till Freyja with the gleaming necklace stepped forth, or Sif with the flowing locks of gold.[1]

Whenever we come upon the gods singly, stripped of all disguise, we find ourselves face to face with a spirit of

[1] So L. Uhland.

victory, superior to brute force, superior to mere matter, a spirit that fights and overcomes, but that rarely rises to moral grandeur, still more rarely to ideal inspiration. In the religious beliefs of the Teuton the stern necessity for subordination has not yet blossomed into noble, moral freedom and beauty. The superiority of the mind is only that of the intellect before whose tribunal love and hate, fidelity and treachery are judged, not in accordance with eternal and unchanging laws, but according to the dictates of momentary advantage: the idea of virtue has not yet advanced beyond that of prudence. Even heinous crimes are not always avenged, although there are dim presentiments that such a state of nature is subject to a higher law, by whose inevitable decrees even the gods undergo chastisement. It is significant that merciless fate is attributed by the poet to irresistible giant forces.

Beneficial and Harmful Deities.

Even the gods must die. The pale shadow of mortality falls upon them. With a melancholy reflectiveness the Teuton has regarded the future of gods and men in the light of fate and deduced a fateful power (Old High German *Wurt*, Old Saxon *Wurth*, Anglo-Saxon *Wyrd*, Old Norse *Urðr*), which from the beginning of things outlives present and future and sees generations of men and gods come and go. It is only among the Scandinavians that we find the idea of a personified fate. Three sisters with the unexplained name NORNS (*cp.* English, *weird sisters*) are symbolic of this belief, and combine the deepest, most mysterious knowledge with the greatest natural strength. They are giantesses.

Strength and intelligence are the adjuncts of the GIANTS in general. While the idea of destiny is so closely associated

with the Norns as to preclude any attempt at classing them as friendly or hostile powers, the relation of the giants towards gods and men is regarded as in the main a hostile one: only rarely do we find them doing good as well as harm. Throughout the whole of northern mythology a sharp contrast is drawn between the giants on the one hand and the gods as creative and governing powers on the other; we do not find, as in other religions, a dualism of good and evil. It is the giants who imperil the life, the peace and security of human and divine society. Only wise alertness can avail against their knowledge and strength. Might, cunning, and skill perfectly combined in the divine hero are always superior to mere bulk or rude force, or foolhardy trust in a mechanical prudence. The victory of the keener intelligence over the more simple-minded was deemed an heroic achievement in olden times and was celebrated no less than bravery of arms.

Friendly and helpful for the most part is the race of DWARFS (or elves, O.N. *dvergar*, *álfar*, etymologically = Sansk. *rbhu*)—beings in whom dwells dexterity rather than might—as we see from the indispensable part they play in everyday life. But there are signs in northern poetry that giants and dwarfs were originally identical phenomena. To the race of dwarfs (O.N. *ljósálfar*, *dǫck-* or *svartálfar*) belonged all the good and evil spirits (O.N. *vættir* = beings) which haunted house and home, field and forest. The cobolds, as indicated by Ags. *cofȝodas* (penates), must be regarded primarily as the invisible guardians of the home (*cof*). The country was full of them. Other protecting deities who held sway, especially in times of war, were the wise women: (the *matres*, *matronæ* of the Latin inscriptions found in Germany belong, however, to Celtic, not to Teutonic popular beliefs); the common Teutonic word may be O.H.G. *itis* (O.S. *idis*, Ags. *ides*), nearly identical in

meaning with O.N. *dís*. They come flying through the air in separate bands, according to the Merseburg charms, in order to liberate the captive; helpful to their friends, wrathful towards their foes, they loosen the fetters of the former and bind the latter by the magic power of their mysterious song. In the cult of the Teutons they played a much more important part than the literary records would lead us to suppose. The sacrifices which were offered to them (O.N. *dísablót*) are a significant testimony. Next of kin to them were feminine guardian spirits or guardian angels (O.N. *fylgjur*) who were thought by the believer to be watching over him. This kind of personal relation between the individual and the invisible powers had developed from the ANCESTOR-CULT; even members of the family who had died were commonly honoured with sacrifices. (In Iceland the spirits of the departed were called *æsir* as well as the gods.) Closely connected with this honouring of the dead was the belief in GHOSTS, seeing that the deceased were said to haunt the graves as evil spirits (O.N. *draugar*) and be the cause of all ill-luck. They are compared to riders who gallop madly through the night and vanish with the first beam of the rising sun. The heathen Teuton saw all around him a varied race of DEMONS (especially wood-sprites, such as O.H.G. *hagazussa*, Ags. *hægtes*, *i.e.* German *hexe* = witch, and Goth. *haljarúna*, O.H.G. *helliruna*, Ags. *hellerune*) in their several haunts, against whose malignant power his only resource was a zealous devotion to witchcraft.

Worship of the Gods.

I. TEMPLES.

No memorial of heathen worship has come down to us. No heathen fane, no image of the gods, hardly a sacrificial vessel seems to have been stored in German

soil; nowhere has an edifice remained standing in which heathen men did reverence to their gods. All the buildings would seem to have been destroyed by the missionaries at the time of the conversion to Christianity, seeing that we hear often enough of heathen temples having been set on fire, now in this place, now in that. But it is not impossible that heathen temples were reconsecrated as Christian churches, or that the oldest Christian churches in Scandinavian countries were built in the style of temples, and that, for instance, a log church in Norway gives us a picture of the old heathen wooden structures such as are repeatedly described in Old Icelandic literature.

According to these descriptions the Scandinavian temple was a right-angled, oblong building, consisting of two unpartitioned chambers, a larger and a smaller, with a semicircular apse visible from the outside, and probably containing the sacred requisites used for worship. The building material was wood, probably with ornamental carving, such as may be seen in the old Scandinavian wooden churches of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. The method of construction presupposes a knowledge of shipbuilding, and demanded no technical skill beyond that possessed by a maritime people. A temple 130 yards long and 65 broad was considered unusual in Iceland. The building was enclosed, its walls provided with loop-holes, it had an open roof, and was adorned with wall-hangings; occasionally the walls were further ornamented with precious metals. On the door hung a ring. Within the temple doors were pillars supporting the structure; in the middle of the longer northern wall stood a seat of honour for the guardian of the temple, with representations of the gods on its posts; lower benches ran along the shorter side-walls; in the semicircular apse probably stood images of the gods. At the time of Tacitus images of their gods were still unknown among the Teutons. In

later times frequent reference is made to them. They were for the most part of wood, rarely of stone, in human form, dressed in clothes, sometimes ornamented with gold and silver and placed on a pedestal. A runic inscription in Gothic on one of the numerous gold rings found in Roumania refers to a valuable temple treasure of which portions have been preserved.

In the home the worship of the gods centred round their images carved on the seat reserved for the head of the family; smaller figures were worn as amulets. In the temple the images of several gods seem to have stood together. In front of them was the altar covered with iron, on which burned the sacred, never-dying fire. There, too, lay an unclosed ring, with which all oaths were sworn. The priest had to dip it into the blood of the animal sacrificed, and apparently wore it round his neck at all festive assemblies as a symbol of dependence upon divine favour. There was besides on the altar a great copper vessel of blood, and a small brush with which to smear the blood upon the altar and to sprinkle those who assisted at the sacrifice. The ceremony of sprinkling the blood was a symbol of the communion between the divinity and the congregation, and in signification resembled the use of blood when men swore brotherhood with one another. As a rule there was a larger or smaller wood outside the building, with a sacred sacrificial well into which the bodies of the victims were lowered.

The further back we go in antiquity, the more shadowy become the walls of the temple, which in its earlier form was a sacred spot in the forest surrounded and shut in by trees and untouched by human hands. Tacitus tells of temples among the Teutons, but he was most deeply impressed by the pious custom of worshipping the gods in the silent forest shade. The quiet grandeur of the mighty

German forest seemed to the Roman a fane incomparably more worthy than the pomp of classic temples. The sacred grove seems to have been the most usual place of worship in earliest times, if not the only one. Even in Christian centuries we have a testimony that this was so in the old Teutonic word O.H.G. *haruc*, Ags. *heorȝ*, O.N. *hǫrgr*, which originally meant forest and was used later for temple buildings as well. The temple was in the first instance a place of refuge, where everlasting peace sheltered even the outcast, and where weapons were forbidden; this was expressed by the word O.H.G., O.S., Ags. *wîh*, O.N. *vé*; in the Heliand the Jewish temple is called *friduwîh*. It is significant that the name for altar in Teutonic is derived from this word, Teutonic *wîhabiuda* (literally, temple-table), as preserved in Ags. *weobed* (altar). On the other hand, Goth. *alhs*, O.H.G. *alah* (*e.g.* place-names such as Alahstat), Ags. *ealh*, *ealhstede*, may be taken to denote the temple-building, as Fris., Ags., O.N. *hof* certainly does, and as is obvious from the word *house* in the compounds Goth. *gudhûs*, O.N. *goðahús*, *blóthús*, O.H.G. *plózhûs*, *plóstarhûs* (house of sacrifice).

2. Sacrifices.

The religious ceremonial was intimately connected with the state. The king (tribal chieftain) is *ex officio* guardian and lord of the temple, and in view of his divine nature is at the same time the chief priest of the land. It was a part of old Teutonic religious belief to hold the king responsible for national disaster, such as war and famine, and his sacrificial death the only possible expiation of his guilt. It was awe of a higher power in the royal race that prevented the Danes from fettering their king like ordinary mortals; their loyalty to their

king shrank from offering such an indignity; bloody execution was more honourable, according to Saxo Grammaticus. The same mingling of secular and religious powers extends to the lowest judicial authorities in the smallest community. The functions of the chief official include that of priest, who is always a personage of rank and honour. In Gothic the priest is called *gudja* (derived from *gud* = God), Danish runic inscriptions have preserved the form *guði* (later *goði*); in O.H.G. *cotinc* (tribunus) has become the designation of an entirely secular office. The idea of priestly function is inseparable from the Icelandic *goði*, which generally denotes the possessor of the temple and guardian of the temple treasury. The building was supported by his income. For this purpose he levied a tax, the temple-toll (O.N. *hoftollr*), which had to be paid by all who frequented the temple. Among the West Teutons the priestly office was in the hands of the law-giver, who possessed full knowledge of existing laws and was better qualified than any one else to guard the religious rights of the family and of the community. In O.H.G. he was called *êwarto* (warder of the law), *êsago*, O.S. *êosago* (used in the Heliand for priest), O. Fris. *âsega* (law-sayer, priest); and entirely identical with these was the Icelandic *lǫgsǫgomaðr* (law-sayer-man, law-giver), who probably likewise exercised certain religious functions, seeing how closely the legal institutions of the primitive Teutons were connected with their belief in the gods. The more active religious rites in particular may have been the care of the law-giver; as seer and as spokesman, to whom appertained solemn declamation in traditional form, he may, for instance, have taken a leading part when the oracles were consulted, and may have acted as umpire at the trials by ordeal, whilst it was the business of the *goði* (priest) to guard the temple and to preside at the sacrifices. More-

over, the temples were in the vicinity of the place of judgment, where the people assembled regularly to attend the meetings of the *Thing* (popular assembly). Tuesday, in the first place, or more rarely Thursday, was the appointed day. The popular assembly was under the direct protection of the god Tiw (*cp.* in Alemannic dialects *Zistag* and Engl. *Tuesday*), to whom a special cognomen was given on that account. The business of the national assembly was begun with certain religious ceremonies.

Thrice a year the people of the district came together in order to attend the great sacrificial festivals in the temple. At WINTER-NIGHT (about the middle of October) sacrifices were offered for a good season; at MID-WINTER (the end of January) the Yuletide festival was kept, when for three days sacrifices were offered for peace and fertility; at BEGINNING OF SUMMER (the middle of April) the people petitioned for good luck and victory in the undertakings of the coming summer. The sacrifices were intended to gain the gods' favour and appease their wrath. The offerer hoped to avert injury at the hands of the invisible powers and to reap personal advantage. Sacrifice is offered by man to the gods in expectation of benefits from them in return; a human life is sacrificed to them in order that they shall spare the survivors (*do ut des*). It was the occasion of especial rejoicing if the god showed by a sign that the sacrifice was acceptable, if, for instance, Odin's ravens appeared in sight.

The sacrifices as a rule involved the shedding of blood: the priest had to slaughter oxen, horses, sheep, swine, and collect the blood in the vessel set apart for the purpose.[1] Thereupon a fire was kindled in the middle of the temple, the flesh cooked in cauldrons, the broth and meat consumed together. In Germany in later

[1] See *ante*, p. 20.

times the head or some other part of an animal was often buried or hung up and in this way consigned to the gods. One of the Christian missionaries narrates that in the great sacrificial grove of Upsala he saw seventy-two carcases of dogs, horses, and men hanging on the trees as a propitiation of the gods.[1] Human sacrifices were frequent. Saxo Grammaticus relates that once a Norse king, when in great straits, even sacrificed his two brave sons in order to purchase victory for his country from the gods of war with the blood of his own kin. The people were wont to tarry long together at the religious feasts, the expenses of which were defrayed by the priest from the temple revenues; or, in other cases (*e.g.* in Norway), everything needed for the feast had to be brought by the individuals. Hogsheads of beer and mead were emptied, after the drinking-horn had been consecrated in the fire, in draughts of grateful remembrance (called *minne*) first to Odin for victory and might and afterwards to the other gods and departed relatives. This was also the occasion for taking vows accompanied by solemn recitation and harp-playing, for receiving divine consecration in serious resolves and for deepening and strengthening one's purpose in life. It seems probable that the Teutons had besides sacrificial dances, at least Ags. *lác* (= dance and sacrifice) points to that conclusion. If we are justified in picturing such dances by the light of modern popular customs, we may imagine them to have been like those of Mecklenburg of to-day where the peasants leave a bushel of corn uncut, and dance round the ears in a ring singing: "Wode, Wode, hol dinen rosse nu voder!" (= Woden, Woden, now fetch fodder for your horses!) Perhaps sacrifice, dance, and song were similarly united in pagan days.

[1] See *ante*, p. 8.

Family sacrifice was not limited to the great congregational sacrifices; the head of the household was at liberty to present his gifts and petitions to his gods at any time. Especially in time of war every battle was the occasion of a festival of great sanctity, when the god of war and victory received a rich harvest of offerings. Foes were slain in his honour, and the prisoners of war were hanged on trees or gallows as offerings. The prisoners of war underwent the same punishment as criminals, *i.e.* they were hanged, drowned in the marsh or the sacrificial well, or executed on the seashore and buried in the sand. The ferocious cruelty of a barbaric race shows itself in a Norse custom of carving a bloody eagle from the foe, *i.e.* by severing the ribs from the spine with the sword and taking the lungs out through the open wound; but there is no evidence that this atrocity was ever committed in early times. It was a practice in Scandinavia —probably more frequent in description than in actual usage—when starting upon a sea-voyage to place human sacrifices upon the rollers on which the ships were launched into the sea, and let the weight of the vessels crush the devoted victims. The majority of the human sacrifices of the Teutons were regarded as the payment of a penalty demanded by divine justice which the individual might enact in his own person; hence suicide was justified as a voluntary sacrifice. Even when bleeding under the strokes of the foe, the chosen of the god would expire in the joyous belief that the god himself had dealt the death-blow in order to summon his victim to Valhalla.

3. Oracles.

M. Müller has somewhere stated that nowhere in our planet have human beings been discovered who did not possess some form of religion. Man sees his life

threatened by forces before which he is powerless, he is hemmed in by barriers and limitations of all kinds; and it is this inevitable lot of mankind which has at all times led him to look upwards and seek help from the deity as a power which can influence the conditions of his life. Trouble, or perhaps the universal consciousness, felt most acutely in trouble, of the insecurity of his life and of the goods which he prizes is the mainspring of religion.[1] Hence religion is in its essence practical, and can only exist as faith in an extraordinary power, different from anything in the world; a power possessing intelligence and volition (after the analogy of the believer's own nature), which form the means of communication with the divine *numen*. In every religion the necessity is felt in one way or another of giving actuality to the divinity, of assuming that it reveals itself in a way that concerns the weal and woe of men.

Oracles were originally of a practical nature: direct assistance for the life of the individual was sought; not the unveiling of the future. The instinct of self-preservation appeals to a higher power beyond its sphere for the furthering of human well-being, and sees this belief confirmed by the revelation of the divinity. This revelation may consist in natural phenomena, the extraordinary character of which points to the direct intervention of the divinity, or it may be associated with the divinity by myth and tradition. As a rule, we find among all primitive peoples the concurrent belief that favoured persons, priests and priestesses, are by their mysterious relation to the divinity themselves able to cause revelations. Such revelations constitute the oracle in the widest acceptation of the term. The appeal to oracles always has reference to the interests of the worshipper. Difficulties arising from the uncertainty of the

[1] J. Kaftan.

future and imperilling the lot of men have to be overcome. In the ardour of this struggle the human combatant becomes fired with the ecstatic belief that he is the possessor of supernatural powers, and can to some extent control nature and its processes. Magic, divination, witchcraft in its varied forms, all have a similar origin.

With the Teutons oracles became enveloped in a sacred mysticism. For the most part women were the ministrants. According to Jacob Grimm, the imagination of women is more vivid and more receptive than that of men. But whilst the Greeks painted a Medea in the blackest colours as a being hated as much as she was feared, the Teutons bowed to the decisions of a woman like Weleda, who from her tower in the land of the Bructuarii (Westphalia) proclaimed the will of the gods and prophesied victory to her countrymen in their struggle with the Romans. The grateful people laid the best of their booty at her feet. Nowhere have we more decisive evidence of the constraining power of religious feeling than in the universal recognition which was accorded Weleda by the whole of the wild insurgent army of the Batavian Civilis.

Of the forms used in heathen times in the service of divine revelation we know little. But in view of the surprising agreement on this particular point among all primitive peoples, there is no doubt that we may assume the same categories as may still be observed to-day. In the first class we always find sacred words and formulas which were muttered, or, at a later date, written down, and were known and valued far and wide on account of their magical efficacy. In later times we hear of amulets and talismans containing written sayings, which the worshipper wore on his person. The concoctions brewed by sorcerers and sorceresses of pagan times in their magic cauldrons probably differed but little from the elixirs and

magic potions of the quacksalvers and witches of a later age. We shall not be wrong in attributing the roots, herbs, stones, animals, shells, teeth, claws, tails, which still play a part in popular superstition to-day, to the black art of our ancestors. The priestesses and wise women (O.H.G. *idisi*) who were the objects of popular veneration could as little dispense with mystic charms as the malignant witches (Goth. *haljarûna*, O.H.G. *hellerûn*) who roamed about the country. An old name for the latter is *túnriður* (Germ. *Zaunreiterinnen*, "hedge-riders"), but we have no further indication of its meaning; the name hag (German *hexe*, O.H.G. *hagazussa*, Ags. *hæʒtesse*) is evidently connected with the grove (*cf.* Ags. *haguðorn*, Eng. hawthorn). Mention will be made later of the weird Heiðr-Gullveig, who brought upon herself the punishment of the gods for her unholy doings in the dwellings of men. In the majority of cases the prophetic women are in the service of beneficent powers, and enjoy the greatest veneration.

Scandinavian tradition tells of a Thorbjorg who wandered about the country in the winter time and was bidden by the inhabitants to prophesy to them She would appear at evening in a dark cloak studded from top to bottom with precious stones; she always wears a necklace of glass pearls and a black sheepskin cap lined with white cat's-fur. In her hand she carries a wand, as do all her kind (and hence they are called *vǫlva*, pl. *vǫlur*, *i.e.* wand-bearers). She is girt with a girdle of cork, to which a wallet is attached containing the magic charms. Her hands are incased in gloves of cat's-skin, her feet in calfskin shoes. She is greeted reverently by all present, and the master of the house shows her to the seat of honour, on which a pillow of feathers has been placed for her. She utters her predictions seated on her four-legged stool. It is noteworthy that the wise women follow their avocation in

the night. Their soothsaying is chiefly in request for domestic concerns, and their ready help is extended to the most varied needs. In particular, they are able to heal the diseases of domestic animals as well as of men by their spells. But their most important office in earliest times seems to have been the cutting of little pieces of wood, on which they carved symbols, and then used them for casting lots, by which the will of the gods was revealed. But this office must not be regarded as their special prerogative. Tacitus has shown that every head of a family might cut a twig from a fruit-bearing tree, divide it into small portions, mark each with a symbol, and toss them into the air over a white cloth to learn the decisions of chance. In matters which concerned the public welfare the priest performed this ceremony:[1] with prayer and upturned glance he picks up each stick thrice and interprets it according to the symbol cut on it. It is remarkable that in a Frisian statute-book in an eighth-century manuscript we find this method of consulting the oracle transferred to Christian use. Two sticks are cut from a rod, one of which is marked with the sign of the cross, and afterwards both are wrapped in clean wool; the priest tosses them over the altar; an innocent boy picks up one of the sticks. If he chooses the stick with the sign of the cross it brings good luck, and may, for instance, save an innocent offender. If the question of guilt is to be decided at a trial, and the boy has picked up the unmarked stick, each assessor cuts a stick for himself and marks it with his own sign. The sticks are wrapped in wool and picked up by the boy as before. Eventually the man whose stick is taken last from the altar must be answerable for the accused.

In the world of nature (we shall speak hereafter of oracles in streams) it was especially the birds and the

[1] See *ante*, p. 22.

voices of birds which were interpreted in some indefinable way as messengers and revealers of the divinity. Odin's ravens were accorded very special veneration; falcons, eagles, and swans furthermore were regarded as prophetic birds.

At some place in Germany, of which Tacitus unfortunately has not told us the name, snow-white horses were reared at public expense in a sacred grove, and never used in the service of man. When the king as high priest yoked them to the sacred chariot, their neighing and snorting were carefully observed and the will of the gods inferred therefrom, since it was firmly believed that these horses knew the plans of the heavenly powers. On the outbreak of war, in dread of the uncertain issue, the tribe would secure by some means a member of the hostile camp and compel him to fight with a chosen champion of their own. The death of either combatant was an omen of the result of the war. This ancient heathen custom found its parallel in later times in the trial by combat; similarly we have seen the oracular casting of lots repeated in a Christian church. In their innumerable battles, fought sometimes against Rome, sometimes against their own kinsmen, we may safely assume that the warlike Teutons rushed upon the foe to the sound of the sacred battle-chant with hearts uplifted by the certainty of victory when once the divine oracle had assured them of it. It was to this certainty of victory that the Germans owed the irresistible might of which the Romans spoke with terror. The religious side of their warfare must not be overlooked. But we can only speak of their fatalism in the sense that dying warrior and booty-laden victor alike regarded their lot as the edict of the gods. The Teuton put forth all his strength when fighting for victory in the cause of his gods, and the issue of every battle was for him a decision from on high.

The Number of the Gods.

In Iceland twelve heathen gods are recognised by the learned, a number probably due to the precedent of Greece and Rome. The religious belief of the people themselves knows nothing of such a limitation. Only at a later period was this number artificially fixed. Lists of gods, collected from ancient traditions in the Middle Ages, contains sometimes fourteen, sometimes thirteen, sometimes nine, or even only three names of divinities; of goddesses the names of at least twenty-seven have been collected. This confusion was due to the increasing difficulty of distinguishing between numerous semi-divine beings (heroes) and the gods proper, and to the fact that the different names of one and the same god in many cases were regarded as the appellations of independent deities. Even Jacob Grimm declared that nothing was more difficult than to distinguish between divinities and semi-divinities among the great number of names of female goddesses. The semi-divine beings, however, evidently possessed an importance in the religious cult entirely secondary to that of the gods proper. In the oldest Teutonic religion it is not possible to prove the occurrence of more than three male divinities, and a triad of gods is usually attributed to the Teutons by the historiographers of later times. The names given are Mercury, Jupiter, and Mars, names which really denote the Teutonic gods Woden, Thunor, and Tíw. With them is associated a goddess, originally the great all-mother Earth, the beloved of the gods, and as such called by the name Frija. This earliest group of gods was enlarged in Scandinavia by the addition of heroes, of the divine race of the Vanir, and of Loki, the giant's son, who, however, probably occupied only the position of a servant.

In Germany we have a record, dating from the time immediately preceding the introduction of Christianity, of the three ancient gods under the names Woden, Thuner, and Saxnot; they are the heathen idols to be renounced by the convert at baptism. Assuredly the formula of renunciation would have included other gods if such had existed among the people. It seems that only the three ancient gods were essential to the faith of the heathen Teutons, and that to them alone were worship and sacrifices offered; it cannot, however, now be determined under what name a particular god was worshipped by a particular tribe. We have unmistakable evidence that the same god was differently named by different Teutonic tribes. The determination of the geographical limits of the various tribal cults is still a subject for research.

Among the German tribes the ancient triad was preserved in strict integrity. We also meet everywhere with the goddess and her stately female retinue; but in Scandinavia her omnipresent power is limited by the existence of a second goddess Freyja.

For the details of this group of gods we have to depend upon later, and chiefly Icelandic accounts. They tell us that the sky, the roof of the earth, is the home of the gods; here stand their dwellings (*ásgarðr*), wrought by the hands of the gods, and surrounded by a wall, the work of a giant builder. Inside Asgard each god had his special dwelling-place, described as a temple (*hǫrgr ok hof*). A wondrous bridge—the rainbow is probably intended—unites the earth with the heavenly mead; over this bridge pass the gods, whenever they visit the homes of men or the distant land of the giants, or assemble in their place of judgment.

Woden.

This god is called *Óðinn* in Scandinavia, *Wóden* among the Anglo-Saxons and Frisians, *Wôdan* by Saxons, Franks, Alemanni, and Bavarians (among the last occurs a later form, *Wuotan*). The name still lives in popular tradition, but when, for instance, the Suabian shudders at Muetis' host (*i.e.* Wuotan's host), he does not know that the wild huntsman is the old heathen god.

The god of song and of war represents the ideal of all that is the German's pride and honour, of all that arouses his enthusiasm and his reverence, of all that endears him to his friend and makes him terrible to his foe. It has ever been an inherited characteristic of the Teuton to lift his heart above the passing moment and to concentrate all efforts upon the purpose before him; these characteristics are brilliantly exemplified by Woden as he is depicted in mythology and in poetry.

The Teutonic priest wandered, a rough warrior, from battlefield to battlefield, and in his home ruled the community with wisdom and justice in the spirit of his fathers; wide experience of life had taught him much of this world and of what lies beyond, and as he grew in strength and insight, had made of him a thinker and a poet. Such in its essentials is the picture of Woden (Latin *vates* is etymologically closely akin), though the mysticism of religious feeling, without denying his mortality, assigned to him the perfection of a god.

He bore many names among the people, and yet was always the same creator and ruler. Men told of his knowledge, his travels, his might in war and feud. His outward form was not always the same; the power was attributed to him of changing his shape as occasion arose, for was he not the master and father of magic, possessing

the knowledge of the runes which gave him the sovereignty over the living and the dead, over battle and victory, over weal and woe? To his universal sovereignty were doubtless due his names *Alfǫðr* (All-father) and *Aldafǫðr* (father of men).

The people loved best to see him as an ancient, tall, one-eyed man with flowing beard, in a dark cloak, a sack over his shoulder, his hat drawn deep over his face; perhaps he may be recognised in the Hakelbernd (Gothic *hakuls* = cloak) of modern Westphalian legends. When in armour he wears a golden helmet and shining breastplate, and carries the spear Gungnir. His horse is called Sleipnir (*i.e.* the swift one), eight-footed, grey-coloured, which bears him through the air and the sea and even down to hell. From his seat on high (*Hliðskjalf*) he sees everything that occurs. Every day he sends two ravens (*Huginn* and *Muninn*) to fly over the earth; on their return they settle on his shoulders and whisper into his ear all that has happened; the power of understanding the language of birds was in ancient times proverbially equivalent to the profoundest knowledge. The winged messengers see and hear what is preparing or impending in the future. Odin can transform himself into a snake and creep through the rocks, or he flies off on eagle's wings. Most often he disguises himself on his wanderings, and journeys unknown as a travelled stranger, asking like a beggar for shelter now here, now there (cf. such names as Grimnir, Wegtamr, Gestr). Much has he travelled, much has he seen and proved. He has grown hoary with age; he is the head of a numerous family, and can point to ancestors who lived in the beginning of time. His father is Borr (son), the child of Buri, whom the cow Auðhumla is said to have licked out of the salt ice-rock in three days. On his mother's side Odin's grandfather was the giant Bolthorn, whose daughter Bestla was Odin's

mother, and her brother Mimir his uncle. With Mimir, one of the primeval giants, Odin is united by the closest bonds of friendship. For, shortly after his birth, Odin was exposed, wounded by a spear-thrust, and hanged as a sacrifice on the gallows-tree. Nine days and nights he hung upon the tree a prey to the fury of the storm. He suffered greatly from pain, hunger, and thirst, until he saw his uncle Mimir beneath him, who taught him magic charms, freed him from the tree, and at the same time rendered him secure from further attacks by giving him drink from the cauldron Oðrérir. Now, in the words of an old lay, he began to grow and to get understanding.

With his brothers Vili and Vé, Odin lifted the earth out of the depths of the sea. From this act of creation was doubtless derived his name *Gautr*. Apparently it was the same three gods (though called Odin, Hönir and Lóðurr) who gave life to the first pair of human beings. They had found on the shore two lifeless human forms (Askr and Embla), fashioned by dwarfs out of trees. To these Odin gave breath, Hönir understanding, Lóðurr warmth and fair colour. This otherwise unknown Lóðurr (the name is identical with the Old Indian *Vrtra*) is probably synonymous with Thor; Hönir is the same as Tyr.

Woden's wife is Frija (whom the Langobards called Frea, Ags. *Frige*, O.N. *Frigg*). There is evidence to show that she did not originally belong exclusively to Odin; Vili and Vé are also brought into close connection with her.

1. The Theft of Oðrérir.

The cauldron Oðrérir contained a magic potion, of which Odin already knew the saving power and wisdom-giving potency. Hence the wish arose within him to

possess this valuable treasure himself and to transfer it from the secret keeping of the giants to his own personal use.

Two dwarfs are said to have prepared the potion from blood and honey; the blood was the blood of Kvásir, the wisest of all men, whom the gods had created from their excreta. Afterwards the potion came into the possession of the giant Suttungr, who caused his daughter Gunnlǫð to keep watch over it in the rock Hnitbjorg. Odin, under the name of Bǫlverkr, visited the giant. Suttungr was not to be induced to give him a draught. At last Odin, in the form of a snake, bored his way through the walls of rock, and Gunnlǫð on her golden stool gave him a draught of the precious mead. Three days he rested in Gunnlǫð's arms, drank the whole cauldron dry, flew back to the gods in the form of an eagle, and when he had returned to Asgard he spued the draught into a vessel, which must be conceived as thenceforth hidden in the sacred city of the gods. Besides the cauldron Oðrérir, there are mentioned the other vessels *Boðn* and *Són*. Gunnlǫð's love was ill requited by Odin; without her his enterprise would have failed, and yet he denied her when the giants came and asked whether Odin had been the thief. He even swore falsely that he had not cheated Suttungr of the mead, nor left Gunnlǫð in tears.

The possession of the magic cauldron endowed Odin with extraordinary wisdom. The draught heightened his mental powers to divine omniscience and gave to his words the consecration of poetry. For in ancient times no knowledge was recognised but that expressed in song. The potion doubtless originally had the same signification as the Old Indian *soma*, which, according to the legend, Indra, in the form of a falcon, brought to the gods; or as the Greek nectar, which the great eagle of Zeus fetched from a rock in the farthest west. Gunnlǫð, one of the Val-

kyries, to judge from her name, is the earliest example of the unhappy maidens whom German legends banish to mountain caverns to guard gold and other treasures. In Sweden a story is told of the knight Tynne, similar to that of the German Tannhäuser; Tynne was enticed by fair maidens into the mountain and then dismissed with healing charms and the gift of speaking noble words.

The love of women even in the oldest tradition forms a part of the singer's life. In northern poetry we hear but little of it; all the more attractive is the brief story of how the intrusive Odin was mocked by the fair daughter of Billingr. Glorious as the sun was the maiden's beauty, and to the god it seemed a royal pleasure to seek her in marriage. He had crouched among the reeds waiting for his love. Dear as life itself was the maiden to him, but she did not come; then he came secretly to her in the night thinking to have gained her love, but her attendants were awake and lighted fires burned bright. Towards morning he came again, the attendants were asleep, but the dog kept watch. Thus in every way had the maiden mocked him.

2. Mimir.

We have already made acquaintance with Mimir as Odin's uncle, and the lord or keeper of Oðrérir, the mead of poets. An imaginative poet describes him to us as the guardian of the spring flowing from the root of the ash Yggdrasill, which overshadows the world. Daily he draws from the spring the draught which gives him wisdom. Nothing in the past, nothing in the future, is hidden from him. Odin appears and begs a draught; his knowledge had failed him, and he sees the end of all things threatening before him. Mimir demands one of the god's eyes as a pledge. The god accedes willingly,

glad to have gained his object, even at such a cost. The eye remains in Mimir's keeping, and he uses it every morning as a drinking cup. The mysterious wisdom of Mimir seems to have a basis in popular tradition if we connect it with the ancient custom of venerating running streams, especially at the sources.[1] Plutarch tells us that Teutonic women, by gazing into the eddying streams, were able to predict future events from the movement of the water. We read of a sorceress in England who held dialogues in the night-time with the guardian of a spring (*custos fontium*). So we may assume that the appeal to oracles in springs formed the religious nucleus which received poetic accretions in the story of Mimir.

Mimir's spring is unfathomable, for all streams in heaven and earth have their sources in it. The poet calls the streams and rivers Mimir's sons. At the end of the world the rebellion of the sea plays an important part. At the first indications of what is to come Odin wishes to gain assurance by questioning the oracle of Mimir's spring. The poet tells how he seeks information from the keeper of the fathomless source of the sea as to what is preparing in its depths.

The pledging of the god's eye is a symbolical conception of the Scandinavian poet. He does not wish to state in plain words that Odin came to the spring in the silence of night; he pictures the god as the mighty universe, whose eye, the sun in the heavens, dips at night-time from the edge of the earth into the sea. In the radiance of dawn, before the sun rises and is seen emerging from the watery deep, the keeper of the sea seems to the poet to be drinking from the golden sun-goblet life-giving wisdom which is as fathomless as his own pure element.

The poet's quick imagination passes from one image to

[1] So L. Uhland.

another. At the Twilight of the Gods Odin is described as speaking with Mimir's head, which in other Edda lays is represented as expounding the truth oracularly. In a rationalistic version of the story which has grown out of this poetic figure, Mimir's head is smitten off by the Vanir. They are supposed to have sent it to Odin, who anoints it, utters magic spells over it, which cause it to speak and initiate him into many unknown mysteries. Again, Mimir's head stands, by a poetic license, for the spring in the same way that in common parlance (*e.g.* in place-names such as Springhead) the source of a stream is spoken of as the head.[1]

According to popular belief there lurked in the wonders of the watery element a strange gigantic demon, the inscrutably wise father and lord of streams, of rivers, and of the sea, with whom the believer might commune by seeking the advice of his spring, that is, by consulting the spring as an oracle. So to Mimir at night-time came Odin, whom the poets are wont to call Mimir's friend. It is to Mimir, whose protection had once been the saving of his life, that he turns in his last great need when a shadow falls on the life of the gods. Pagan belief did not so far idealize its gods as to make them eternal or omniscient. Saxo Grammaticus, too, tells us that Odin, although regarded as the first of the gods, sought advice from sorcerers and soothsayers when his future was threatened by dire events.

3. Runic Lore.

The wisdom gained by drinking from the cauldron Óðrérir consisted in a knowledge of the runes and of magic songs or incantations. Both kinds of knowledge can be included under the comprehensive term Runes.

[1] So K. Müllenhoff

About the second century of the Christian era traders had introduced the Latin alphabet of Imperial Rome among the Teutonic tribes.[1] The strange writing was deemed of magic power. Probably the reason was that the foreign merchants sold to the Teutons outlandish amulets and talismans, in which the magic was contained in engraved letters. In imitation of this foreign custom we find native Teutonic inscriptions on weapons (spear-blades, swords, &c.), bracelets, rings, horns, combs, small golden plates, small stones, and similar objects. Little stones and trifles of small value engraved with letters were popular charms, which at a much later period were still carried by heathen Scandinavians in their pockets. The separate letters of the magic inscription were called O.H.G. *rûna*, Ags., O.N. *rún*, Goth. *rûna*. The root meaning of the word was *mystery*, mysterious wisdom and speech, especially in the sense of mysterious muttering and incantation, such as had always since primitive times formed part of the magic rite when the charm was to have the desired effect. It was held that the letters scratched into an object possessed a wonderful magic potency.

On Odin's knowledge of runes, imparted to him by Mimir, depends his magic power over all external nature and over the senses of men. For instance, it is this knowledge which enables him to appear as a doctor. The German tribes also reverenced Woden for his unequalled knowledge of magic charms; he alone could restore his horse's twisted foot. Frija had not the power to do it, nor had the other godlike women who, according to the Merseburg charm,[2] were riding with the god to the forest. This power appears as an evil one when Odin

[1] Cp. *Deutsche Altertumskunde* (Sammlung Göschen).

[2] Cp. *Althochdeutsche Literatur* (Sammlung Göschen, No. 28, i. 2).

is at the Russian court, where he woos the king's daughter Rindr. To escape recognition he had drawn his hat deep down over his face and desired to serve in the Russian army. He gained a brilliant victory and became the king's trusted friend. After a time he confessed his love to the king, who encouraged it. Odin approached the maiden and begged for a kiss, but received a blow on the mouth. The next year he returned in disguise, called himself Hróptr, pretended to be a goldsmith, and wrought wonderful presents for the princess; his reward, instead of a kiss, was this time a box on the ears. Yet a third time Odin appeared before the king, again under the form of an aged warrior. The hard-hearted maiden thrusts him away for the third time, and with such violence that his chin touched the earth. Then followed the god's terrible vengeance. With a piece of cork, on which he had scratched a charm, he touched Rindr, who at once lost her reason. No one could help her. At last an old woman appeared who had the power to heal her; it was Odin himself.

There were magic chants to which was attributed the power to bring help in all anxiety, sorrow, and pain, to heal all diseases, to blunt hostile weapons, to break fetters, to stay missiles in their flight, to quench flames, to end hatred between men, to calm winds and waves, to bring the warriors strong and well into battle and out of it, to gain the love of women, and the like. These incantations appealed to forces lying beyond the powers of man, and hence they link themselves to the divine being from whom the desired help or harm was supposed to come.[1] With all Teutonic peoples this god of magic and runes was Odin, the chief of all magicians, the father of magic, as he is sometimes called. By singing the death charm he can call a dead witch from her grave. Specially gifted

[1] So L. Uhland.

men were able to cause the dead to speak, and for this purpose laid a twig carved with runes upon the tongue of the corpse. The runic signs derived their efficacy from the charm of consecration addressed to the hidden god, who was the true source of their mysterious power.

The conception of runic lore was, however, enlarged by poetical speculation. In some of the lays of the Edda the term runes denotes the general life of gods and spirits, all mysteries, not merely the practice of magic with its dependence on the powers of the unseen world. The whole sphere of the unseen is comprehended under runes taken in this sense. In the school of the Scandinavian poets was developed a complete mythology, and a knowledge of this mythology was likewise denominated runic lore.

In this branch of knowledge also Odin is without a rival. A lay is put into his mouth in which he, in masterly fashion, enumerates the names of all the cities, animals and rivers of the gods, the names of the Valkyries, and finally the long list of his own names. In another lay Odin is represented as going forth to a contest with a giant (*Vafþrúðnir*) in respect of their knowledge of the runes. Bearing the name *Gagnráðr*, he appeared before the giant, and asked him of the runes of the giants and all the gods. The giant was to tell him what river divided the world of the gods from that of the giants, what the sun's steed was called, whence came the earth and sky, the sun and moon, day and night, winter and summer, who was the oldest giant, and so forth. All this the giant can answer until Odin puts a final question which proves too much for the giant's knowledge. The god's superiority reveals to the giant the true nature of his rival. In the solution of riddles Odin is unrivalled. The Scandinavian poets loved to throw into the form of riddles their knowledge of myth-

ology, *i.e.* their conception of the nature of an unseen world.

Further, every revelation made from the invisible world of the gods to men was called a "rune" by the Scandinavians. The symbolic language of the poets developed the knowledge of these divine revelations (*e.g.* by means of oracles) into a sort of esoteric doctrine. Pre-eminent men and heroes, such as Sigurðr, were instructed in this kind of runic lore; a Valkyrie was the skilful instructress. She taught Sigurðr battle runes which, when graven on the sword, would bring him victory, and beer runes to be scratched on the drinking-horn as a protection against woman's guile. Once Gunnhildr invited Egill to be her guest, and caused poisoned beer to be offered him. Egill's suspicions awoke, he scratched runes upon the horn and traced the runes with his blood, when lo! the horn burst in pieces and the beer flowed on the ground. Runes were also used as a charm against sickness, or they were carved on rudders and oars to insure safety at sea. Special talent for speaking in the popular assembly or special distinction as a poet was likewise connected with the secrets of runic lore. Hróptr—a name for Odin, assumed, for instance, when he was at the Russian court —composed these runes from the liquid which had run from Heiðdraupnir's skull and from Hoddrofnir's horn (the draught Óðrérir is intended); he stood on the mountain bearing sword and helmet, while Mimir's head uttered true runes; some of these are kept by the Aesir, some by the elves and Vanir, while the children of men have others, *i.e.* some revelations of the unseen world penetrate as far as the lives of men. The wise can read them on the claws of bears, and of wolves, on the eagle's beak, and on bloody wings. Many a sage has been able to announce the will of the gods to the people from the appearance of these animals when the oracle was consulted. The life of nature is ruled by the divine

powers; Hróptr (*i.e.* Odin) has engraved runes upon visible things, a divine alphabet intelligible only to the thinking spirit. If it were allowable to read modern conceptions into ancient thought, the Scandinavian doctrine of the runes might be regarded as a mythological philosophy of nature, based upon the current belief in magic, but developed far beyond the limits of a religion by the transcendental speculation of the poets.

4. Bragi.

When Odin had gained the magic mead, he desired to share it with men of his choice. He, the skilled in song, taught men the art of poetry. Nevertheless there appears in the Edda among the Aesir another god, Bragi, after whom poetry was named Bragr, and who is called the chief of scalds. He was apparently the son of Odin and Gunnlǫð, the giant's daughter whom Odin had visited in the mountain and cheated of the draught from Oðrérir. Like his father, he was represented as an aged man with flowing beard, armed, and on horseback. With poetic insight Iðunn, the goddess of eternal youth, is assigned to him as his wife, she who keeps the venerable father of singers young even in old age—a beautiful symbol of the undying freshness of poetry. The poet describes Bragi as serving Odin both as hero and as minstrel; it is he who greets the valiant slain as they enter Valhalla. There is no evidence that Bragi ever possessed any importance for religion; as the father of poets he is evidently a creation of the age of the Vikings due to the growing professional pride of the Norse scalds. At the courts of kings and princes, the scalds occupied the same honourable position as their imagination assigned to the scald of Valhalla. Bragi cannot be regarded as an independent poetical figure; Odin always stands as the original source of all poetic faculty.

5. Starkaðr.

It is Odin again who gave the sacred gift of poetry to the aged Starkaðr, the heroic warrior of the ancient past. This legendary hero bears the epithet of the "Old"; he had lived through several generations, had traversed distant countries, had held intercourse with many kings, and everywhere gained honour and renown. He praised the stern life of the good old times, the rough food and simple drink of the kings and warriors of the past before luxurious habits had been introduced from Germany into the Danish court. Keen as sword-blades are the words of reproof and exhortation by which he urges the effeminate young king Ingjaldr to avenge his father's death. Once when he was sitting on the mountain-side awaiting the foe he was to fight, he was found buried in snow up to his shoulders; he had thrown the costly cloak given him by the king's daughter into the bushes, and had begun catching fleas. When after the victorious fight he had sunk on the rock, exhausted by his terrible wounds, a lasting impression of his form was left upon the stone. When weak with age he grew tired of life, he hung a bag of gold about his neck in order to bribe some one to kill him. And when he had gained his end, and his head had been struck off, his body continued to fight, while his teeth bit into the earth.

The fame of Starkaðr was great in the North in ancient times. The old pagan warriors, with their rough virtues and unvarnished crimes, end with him.[1] When the bravest Norse heroes assembled for the great battle of Bravalla, Starkaðr also was present. The Valkyries brandished sword and banner; Odin himself took part in the great conflict of the nations. Starkaðr, Odin's favourite,

[1] So K. Müllenhoff.

was also held to be the author of the great lay of the Bravalla battle of which we have an account in Saxo Grammaticus.

Starkaðr, a giant's son, was specially distinguished for swiftness of foot. He had originally six hands, but the god Thor tore off the four superfluous ones. It was Thor also who, according to the saga, out of hostility to Odin, doomed Starkaðr to have neither son nor daughter, and to be the last of his race. Odin decreed that he should live for three generations; Thor, his antagonist, that in each generation he should perform an act of baseness. Odin gave him the best of armour; Thor denied him the possession of any land. The one granted him movable treasure in abundance, the other ordained that he should never think he had enough. Odin gave him victory after victory; Thor caused him to receive grievous wounds in every fight. Odin granted him the gift of poetry; Thor caused him to forget the poems he had made; and while Odin made him of high repute with the nobles, Thor took care that he should be hated by the people.

Starkaðr is the type of the warrior as such, the man who, renouncing all civil life, devotes himself wholly to the practice of arms, exactly as the warriors of the Chatti did, according to the description of Tacitus.[1] In this aspect he is the favourite and instrument of Odin, to whom he also acts as priest. This is shown by the remarkable saga of the Norwegian king, Vikarr. When King Vikarr and his comrades were kept long at anchor by contrary winds they had recourse to the oracle, which replied that Odin demanded a man from their host as a sacrifice, to be chosen by lot and then hanged. The lot fell upon the king himself. Starkaðr climbed a lofty rock, bent down the branch of a fir tree, fastened to it the entrails of a newly killed calf, and Vikarr allowed this to be placed

[1] So K. Müllenhoff.

around his neck. Starkaðr thrust with a spear at the king, crying, "Now I dedicate thee to Odin." The branch flew back and lifted the dying king up to the boughs, a sacrifice to the cruel god.

6. Woden among Men.

Woden loved to visit the homes of men as an unknown traveller, and to astonish them by his wisdom. Again and again he called himself by other names, most frequently Gestr (stranger). As an old man he once came to the Norwegian king, Olaf Tryggvason, who had already become a Christian. In the evening he sat long with the king, and when asked what he could do he answered that he could play on the harp and tell stories. He took the harp, played the air of the Niebelung Gunnarr, and in the evening chanted in the hall the old lay of the betrayal of Gudrun (=Chriemhild). He said he himself had been with Siegfried in the land of the Franks; he was called Nornagestr and was three hundred winters old. At his birth had come the Norns. Two promised him great good fortune, but the third cried in anger: "The boy shall not live longer than the candle which is burning beside him." Thereupon the candle was extinguished; but now on his coming to King Olafr he takes it out and lights it; it burns out quickly and he dies.

In Saxo Grammaticus he appears as *Uggerus vates, vir ætatis incognitæ et supra humanum terminum prolixæ.* He has already become a mythical hero. Once he sat with his consort Frigg in Hliðskjalf and looked out over the world. He speaks: "Seest thou thy favourite Agnarr begetting children in a cave with a giantess, while my favourite Geirröðr rules as king in the land?" Frigg accuses Geirröðr of avarice and of torturing his guests. Odin wagers that this is not true, and wishes to assure him-

self. Frigg craftily sends a servant to Geirröðr, bidding him be on his guard against the wizard who has come into the land; he will know him for the dogs will not bark at him. Unrecognised, Odin came to King Geirröðr, calling himself Grimnir (*i.e. larvatus*), in the form of a beggar, in order to try the king's heart. Geirröðr suspected the stranger in the long blue mantle of witchcraft, because the dogs did not attack him, and had him tortured by placing him between two burning blocks of wood. For eight nights Grimnir sat thus without food, and then gave Geirröðr's son who brought him refreshment full tidings of the invisible world of the gods. When he finally told his true name, Geirröðr fell on his sword and died.

Saxo Grammaticus tells of the young Hadding who was wandering deserted, meditating vengeance for his father's death. An old one-eyed man took pity on him, and when he had to flee the old man took him up behind him on his horse. During the wild ride Hadding ventured to peep out from under the cloak by which he was covered, and to his horror he perceived that the horse was galloping over the waves of the sea.

Specially close were Odin's relations with the race of Siegfried, a hero celebrated also in German song, whom the Scandinavians called Sigurðr (*i.e.*, Sigwart). On a stormy voyage Sigurðr and his men saw a man standing on the shore who hailed them, and gave his name as Hnikarr. He was taken on board, when the storm suddenly ceased. Sigurðr, the young Volsung, inquired of him the rules to be observed on the field of battle, and Hnikarr (*i.e.* Odin) taught him a number of favourable omens and stratagems.

Even in the saga of Sigurðr's forefathers, Odin's influence is introduced. The old king, Volsung, the father of Sigmundr and Signy, caused a stately hall to be built. In the midst of it stood a mighty oak tree, the branches of which rose above the roof, while the trunk

was rooted in the hall. Now when Signy, contrary to her wish, was married to King Siggeir, and the guests were sitting in the evening by the fires, a man entered the hall whom no one knew. He was tall, old, and with one eye, barefooted, had a hat on his head, a cloak over his shoulders, and breeches on his legs. In his hand he carried a sword, which he bared and buried up to the hilt in the tree trunk. "Whoever draws this sword out of the trunk," he cried, "shall have it as a present from me; he will find that he has never borne a better." Then the old man left the hall. The spectators tried to draw out the sword, but in vain. At last came Sigmundr and drew the sword out of the tree. But when Sigmundr had grown old and was waging war with some king, a man met him in the fight, thrusting at him with his spear. Sigmundr struck fiercely in return, so that his sword broke in two. His good fortune had left him and he fell. When his wife wished to heal him, he forbade it, saying that Odin wished him to draw his sword no more: he would now see his forefathers who had gone before him into Odin's halls.

7. Battle, Death, and Victory.

War is Odin's work. He causes it. He incites the princes to attack each other. He teaches his favourites stratagems, and himself takes part in the fray in order to help them to victory, or to summon them to Valhalla and gather them around him. As the god of death and victory Odin bears the name Hroptr. When the first great war broke out between the Aesir and the Vanir, Odin, at the beginning of the fight, cast his spear over the hostile host. In the great war between Hringr and Harald Hilditǫnn, which Odin had himself provoked, he took a personal part under the name of Bruni on

Harald's side. He taught Harald a new plan for drawing up his ships in the sea fight. The troops on land he himself drew up in the form of a wedge (like a boar's head or a Greek Δ), a formation (O.N. *svínfylking*, *hamaltfylkja*) which even in Cæsar's time was customary among the Teutons, and was attributed by them to the direct inspiration of Odin the war-god. When nevertheless Harald's troops were outwitted and defeated, Odin did not stay the impending doom, but in the tumult himself gave his favourite Harald the death-blow with his club. Similarly Odin was the cause of Sigmundr's death. In other cases, Odin ordained that his heroes, when their death hour approached, either slew themselves (*e.g.* Hadding) or fell by the hand of another (Vikarr, Starkaðr, and others).

We have here a mystery of the old pagan religion. The god's favoured heroes, taken under his protection, proud of their fame, rich in honours, and whose lives were devoted to the god, yet fell at the close of the day as victims of the god himself. The race must have been strong in faith that recognized even in the death-stroke on the battlefield the hand of the war-god. This was the reason why our ancestors called Odin the Val-father (*Valfaðir*); and all the chosen heroes, dedicated to him from childhood, who fell on the battlefield are called in poetry his adopted sons (*óskasynir*). It is they whom the god marks as his own by their cruel death; it is they who thus earn their claim to Valhalla. Their undaunted courage can face even the god's last inevitable decree.

The Teutonic religion rewarded such heroism by the belief in a future life like that of the gods. Only Odin's favourites, the perfect royal heroes, share as his sons in this divine hereafter. Sigmundr, whom in his last hour Odin encountered as a foe, taking from him his power to fight, was received into Valhalla. He is represented in

poetry and religion as serving Odin there by welcoming the new-comers. A wound with the point of a spear might be symbolic of a warrior's death; such was the wound Vikarr received at the hands of Starkaðr: such was Odin's wound as he hung on the tree a sacrifice to himself. Death from a spear is the mark of the god of war. The Swedish king Eirekr hurls his spear over the hostile host with the cry, "Odin has you all," and by this formula devotes the army to the god. In the Lay of Helgi, Dagr offered sacrifice to Odin that he might be enabled to avenge his father's death; the god lent him his spear, and Helgi, when pierced by this weapon, was received into Valhalla.

8. Valhalla and the Valkyries.

Life in the Hall of the Dead (Valhalla) resembled a great regal court where Odin had his throne, round which the favoured among mortals gathered if they had died on the battlefield or had been sacrificed to him on the altar. To think as a warrior, to live as a warrior—the lot already on earth of famous heroes—constituted the happiness of the hosts in Valhalla. A dark and uncertain future overshadowed even the abode of the gods. None can tell when destiny will overtake the gods and their fates be darkened. None can tell when the dread foes of the Aesir will break their bonds and thus set the whole world in commotion before the final doom. Then Odin's faithful followers will be summoned to the conflict, and the heroes of Valhalla fight for the cause of the gods. We have here the primitive belief, prevalent among many peoples, that the favoured of the gods are received into realms of bliss in the future life, not into the common abode of all departed spirits, but in this case a reason is assigned, viz., that they may one day play their part as

auxiliary forces in the great battle of the gods. Hence life in Valhalla is spent with this one object in view, and entails an ever-recurrent daily warfare.

Odin, the *Hróptr*, *Herjann*, or *Herjafaðir*, dwells with his two wolves and ravens in *Glaðsheimr* (world of gladness), and it is here that Valhalla, glittering with gold, is situated. The description in late poets reads like a fairy tale which has grown out of primitive religious conceptions. The beams are formed of spear-shafts, the roof of shields, the interior is adorned with breastplates, gleaming swords light up the hall. On the western wall hangs a wolf, and above it an eagle. Beyond the hall stands the forest Glasir with golden foliage. The hall is enclosed by a sacred wall (*Valgrindr*), and is further protected by a river. On the roof of Valhalla grazes the goat *Heiðrún* and with the stag *Eikþyrnir* browses the green leaves of the tree *Læráðr*, round the trunk of which the hall is built. From the udders of the goat flows an inexhaustible stream of the rich mead which forms the beverage of the heroes of Valhalla. These heroes are called *Einherjar* (*i.e.* champions), skilled in the art of single combat, in which the decision depends only upon the personal valour of two combatants of equal rank. They are more than four hundred thousand in number; every day eight hundred go in and out at the five hundred and forty doors of the hall. Fair and glorious is the life. Only kings and the nobly born, rich and mighty men with their followers, inhabit the hall. *Andhrimnir*, the cook, seethes the boar, *Sæhrimner*, in the cauldron, *Eldhrimnir*, as food for the heroes; they drink the mead from the goat, but Odin alone drinks wine.[1] Every day the Einherjar ride forth to the field of battle in Odin's

[1] Wine could not have been known to the Scandinavians earlier than the fifth or sixth century.

territory to fight with one another, and then return to Valhalla and feast together amicably.

A magnificent lay, dating from the latter part of Scandinavia's heathen period, describes Odin's awakening in Valhalla at the break of day. He had been warned in his dreams that a vanquished people was on its way to him. The thought that a mighty king of men is coming gladdens his heart. There is a sound of thunder as of the tread of a thousand men. And yet it is only King Eric who has fallen in Northumberland, and five other kings in his train. When Sigmundr asks why Odin did not grant the victory to so valiant a hero, Odin answers that the future is uncertain and he has need of brave warriors. Sigmundr and Sinfjotli go to welcome the new-comers.

There were besides, according to the popular belief, female warriors, heroines who gathered round Odin and his consort (Frigg or Freyja) in the invisible world. These are the Valkyries (O.N. *Valkyrjur*, Ags. *Wælcyrʒe*). We are told that Odin decides by lot which of the slain heroes are to be summoned to Valhalla as a sacrifice to him. If Odin does not appear on the battlefield himself, it is the Valkyries who have to seek out those chosen by the oracle, and conduct them to Valhalla.

One poet tells how the Valkyries *Gǫndul* and *Skǫgul* are sent by Gautatyr (*i.e.* Odin) to the field of battle to choose out heroes of royal blood for Valhalla. They found the king Hakon in battle array. The fight had just begun when *Gǫndul* spoke, leaning on the shaft of her spear, "The number of the gods shall increase when they have summoned Hakon to themselves." The king heard what the maidens said to one another as they sat on horseback, with helmets on their heads, holding their shields before them. Hakon is vanquished, and the maidens ride

over the green world of the gods to tell Odin that a mighty prince is coming. And then he appears, all bloodstained, and is received by Bragi and Hermóðr, and the horn of mead is offered him to drink.

The Valkyries are under Odin's sway, and are punished by him if they transgress the limitations assigned them. They too dwell near the god, evidently as the companions of the Einherjar of Valhalla, to whom they hand the drinking-horn at the banquet, and whose tranquillity they mar by amorous entanglements. Vingolf (the hall of lovers) is the name of their abode, which is under the same roof as Valhalla. We read in Old Norse poetry of the love of earthly heroes, which sprang up like fragrant flowers in the youthful hearts of the hero-maidens. It was not only battle ardour and eagerness for the fray which shone in the sparkling eye of the Valkyrie; the tenderest maidenly feelings slumbered beneath the breastplate. In the same way that the Einherjar are spoken of as adopted sons (O.N. *óskasynir*), the Valkyries are called adopted maidens (*óskmeyjar*), and both are promoted in an identical manner from the rank of men to divine honours.

Of such mortal warrior maidens (amazons) we have numerous historical accounts. Saxo Grammaticus draws unusually beautiful and attractive pictures of them and their dealings with noted popular heroes. It is easy to recognize the prototypes of the godlike Valkyries in these mortal women, who, endowed with every physical and mental gift, not only by their wisdom, magic arts, and soothsaying, but also by their courage and bodily strength, seemed invested with a halo of divinity. They were held in reverence by the people; the account of Weleda, narrated by Tacitus, does not stand alone. A parallel instance may very probably be found in the mighty female figure which appeared to Drusus, the first conqueror of

Germany, on the bank of the Elbe, and called to him the one word "Back," which proved so fatal to him.

The number of the Valkyries cannot be easily fixed, though a late tradition limits them to nine, twelve, or thirteen. Many names of Valkyries are preserved (their significations refer almost exclusively to the business of warfare), but from the nature of the case the maidens are less numerous than the hero-sons of Odin.

Freyja is mentioned especially by the side of Odin as having authority over the Valkyries. In the same way that the heroes who fall on the battlefield belong to Odin, so the warrior maidens belong to Freyja (*i.e.* Frigg), who is said to have a right to half of the "Val." This word "Val," which also occurs in compounds such as Valkyrie, Valhalla, &c., cannot be easily rendered by any modern word. It seems originally to have denoted the "host of the slain," probably of those sacrificed, but not merely the human sacrifices offered on the altar to Odin or Frigg, but also those who fell on the battlefield, whom the Teutons regarded with holy awe as victims devoted to the gods. The O.N. verb *kjósa* (our "choose," Germ. *kiesen*), from which the second element in Valkyrie is taken, had a technical signification in heathen rites, especially in connection with oracles, and referred to the fiat of the divinity as to the acceptance of the votive gift. Thus the Valkyries are connected with the wise women and the Norns. When we read how they weave a web and sing a song as they weave, and how, as soon as the web is finished the issue of the battle is decided, how they mount their steeds and ride six to the north, six to the south, we have evidently the popular belief that the Valkyries were beings by whom the will of the divinity was expressed, and whose business it was to execute this will.

The symbol of the Valkyries was the swan. Swans,

which fly over land and sea, which bathe in quiet lakes and settle on the seashore, were looked upon as transformed Valkyries. We hear, too, of swan-dresses, swan's plumage, which the maidens don, after the naïve fashion of folk-lore. Freyja, to whom the Valkyries owed obedience, possessed a falcon-garb.

Thunor (*Thor*).

As the famous son of *Fjǫrgyn*, Thunor bears in Icelandic sagas the honourable titles, Protector of the Earth, Friend of Men. The home, the dwelling, the family, private property, are under his protection. The vigorous spirit of adventure which the Teutons had developed and exercised in the migratory period formed the most potent factor in the growth of a divine ideal such as is typified by Woden. To the fierce energy in the struggle for existence, to the ardent desire for progress and prosperity, aided by all the resources of mind and art, was added a beautifying complement, the love of home. Old Teutonic poetry unfolds attractive pictures of the warrior held by a hostile fate in a foreign land, and yet unable to tear his thoughts from his native land. It is the god Thunor (called *Þuner* by the Old Saxons, *Þórr* by the Scandinavians) who guards and defends the home.

He it was who gave its name to Thursday (Ags. *þunresdæg*, O.N. *þórsdagr*). Thursday was the day on which in many places the folk met to consult about the common weal, to set in order the affairs of the land, and to maintain peace and concord. In one of the Icelandic lays of the gods (*Lokasenna*) it is Thor who firmly maintains the threatened peace. The fact is significant that in the home Thor's likeness was cut on the chair of state belonging to the head of the family, and brought

prosperity and success to the household. If illness or famine were impending, sacrifice was offered to Thunor. The crops in the field were under his special protection; in his hand lay the fruitful showers, but from him came also the dreaded storms, lightning and thunder (from the thunderclap his name was derived). He bore as his sign and weapon a short-handled hammer (O.N. *mjǫlnir, i.e.* lightning), which he used both in peace and war, to bless or to shatter. Cunning dwarfs are said to have forged it. When Thor wore his belt of strength and his iron gloves, there was no monster that the hammer would not crush. After being thrown it always returned of itself to its master's hand.

In ancient laws we find that the possession of property was settled by throwing the hammer; at weddings the marriage tie was consecrated by Thor's hammer; when the fire on the funeral pile consumed the earthly remains of the dead, Thor's hammer hallowed the fire; on grave-stones Thor is mentioned as the protecting deity. To the new-born babe the Scandinavians could give no greater blessing on his entrance upon life than to bear the god's name as his portion. The name of no god occurs so frequently in proper names as that of Thor (cf. *Þorkell, Þorleifr, Þormóðr, Þorsteinn*, &c.). They had also the beautiful custom of calling their homes by the name of their divine protector. In place-names Thor's name occurs more often than that of any other god. To emigrants he gave fresh dwelling-places, which their piety named after him (*Þórsmark*, &c.), as is related of the Norwegian colonists who settled in Iceland. It is Thor who protects the dwellers on earth against supernatural foes, against giants and evil spirits of all kinds.

From this point of view he was the strongest of the gods. Strength is his most prominent characteristic. Hercules Magusanus (*i.e.* the strong) he is called in the

Latin inscriptions on the Lower Rhine; *Faðer þrúðar ok magna* (Father of might and strength) is his name in Scandinavia. His dwelling-place is *Þrúðheimr* (strength-world), where lies his stronghold *Bilskirnir* (where the stormy sky grows clear).

Of the solemn mystery which surrounds the form of Woden there is no trace in the simple, vigorous Thunor. He never rides, but he drives in a car drawn by two he-goats. More often he travels on foot with a basket on his back. He eats and drinks immoderately, is passionate: we often hear of his godlike wrath, and when he is angry he snorts into his red beard, so that there is a rumble like thunder in the clouds. When he appears among men he is always youthful, fair of face, and tall, with strong, broad shoulders, of mighty presence; *Magni* and *Móði* (strength and courage) are his sons, whose mother, Járnsaxa, apparently came of the race of the giants.

It is clear that Thor, as the enemy of the giants, was himself endowed with their attributes. His weapons, too, are those of the giants. It is noteworthy that whereas Odin on his travels confines himself almost exclusively to the houses and society of the nobly born, Thor is most friendly with the peasants. Two gigantic peasant children, *Þjálfi* and *Røskva* (brother and sister), accompany him and do him service. His wife, Sif, must be imagined as a fair-haired peasant maiden. But nowhere is Thor so wholly the peasant as in the great humorous scene in the Edda which describes a meeting of Thor and Odin (in the *Hárbarðsljóð*). On the one side stands the master of words, cunning, experienced, with ready scorn, and on the other side, separated by a wide river, the helpless, excited Thor, who has to endure all kinds of taunts without being able to answer or defend himself, as tattered as a worn-out shoe, as wretched as a tramp

who has filled his belly with herrings and gruel. His haughty foe boasts of his achievements, and can only shrug his shoulders at the good deeds which Thor has performed for the sake of suffering man. The sons of men would have been destroyed if the race of giants had grown great, and if Thor had not marched eastwards to the fight against the giants and their evil wives.[1] These fights of Thor's are told in detached tales evidently adapted to the taste of simple peasant folk. They give us anecdotes of the hero after the manner of popular legends, and his huge strength is made attractive by the good humour and pleasant wit which goes with it. These stories are typically Teutonic in their cheerful light-heartedness which breaks out when a childlike faith in the sure hand of its God has allayed the haunting dread of evil, and made the heart to rejoice with a deepened trust.

1. Hrungnir.

Thor, the terror of the giants, met Hrungnir at *Grjóttúna* (*i.e.* rocky mountain). His anger rose, the sky rumbled, fires flashed, as he drove along with his goats.[2] The mountains were rent, the sea shone; he was not minded to spare the giant. In the fight Hrungnir threw down his shield and hurled his stone weapon at Thor, but Thor's hammer parried it, and dashed it in pieces; however, a fragment lodged in the god's skull. The giant is slain by a throw of the hammer. Hrungnir's head is said to have been of stone; according to other accounts he had a stone heart. It may be suggested that in him Thor overcame the resistance of the stony ground to the cultivation of the soil: the mighty god assists the labourer who extends his tillage to rocky and stony land.

[1] Whence he is called *Lóþurr* (*i.e.* the fighter).

[2] A description of the thunderstorm.

But other sagas can only with difficulty be made to accord with this interpretation. A witch, Groa, the wife of Orvandill, had succeeded in loosening the fragment of stone in Thor's head by chanting magic songs. Thor tells her that he had brought back Orvandill in his basket from the land of the giants. Her husband had only lost one of his toes, which had stuck out of the basket and been frozen; Thor had broken it off, thrown it up to the sky, and made it into a star. At this Groa is so filled with joy that she forgets her magic songs, and thus the fragment is left sticking in Thor's head. Uhland suggested that this fragment symbolized the stone on which the plough strikes even in the field brought under tillage, and that Orvandill was the germ in the winter seed; his frozen toe signified that the germ had sprouted too soon and had perished in the frosts of spring. This ingenious interpretation of the story can hardly be regarded as complete. The Anglo-Saxon name of the star (*earendel*) shows that it forms a significant feature of the legend.

The star is that called by us the morning star. According to Saxo Grammaticus, Orvandill (*Horvendillus*) in his youth had fought with equal valour and success against a giant on a sea-island in its spring beauty. Hamlet is said to have been his son.

2. Thrymr.

Of the giant *Þrymr* an Edda lay tells as follows. Thor, here called *Vingþórr*, when he awoke one morning, missed his hammer. Loki was able to tell the angry god that it had been stolen. Together they went to Freyja to ask her for her falcon-garb, in order that they might fly out and look for the hammer. Loki flew in the rustling feather-garment until he came to the land of

the giants. There sat Thrymr, their prince, keeping his flocks, tranquilly twisting golden collars for his dogs, and combing his horses' manes. Loki asked: "Hast thou hidden Hlórriði's (*i.e.* Thor's) hammer?" The giant assented; it was lying eight fathoms deep below the ground, and no one should get it again unless he brought Freyja, the fair goddess, to be the giant's bride. When Freyja heard this she snorted with wrath, the ground trembled beneath her, so that the precious necklace (*Brísingamen*) round her neck burst asunder. The Aesir debated how the hammer was to be recovered. Heimdallr advised that Thor himself should be clothed and adorned as the bride. So they fastened the great Brising necklace about his neck, women's garments flowed down over his knees, and the housewife's keys jingled at his side. Loki went with him disguised as his waiting-maid. The goats were yoked. As they drove along the rocks were rent under the car, and the earth burned and flamed. The giant received his longed-for bride. At the wedding feast she alone devoured an ox and eight salmon, and drank three hogsheads of beer. Never had the giant seen a maiden bite so strongly or drink so hugely. But the cunning waiting-maid said, Freyja has eaten nothing for eight days, so great was her longing for her lover. The giant's sister came in and demanded gold rings from Freyja as a gift from the bride. Then Thrymr sent for Thor's hammer to consecrate the marriage bond. Hlórriði's heart laughed when he saw his hammer once again. He seized it, slew the giant prince, and destroyed his whole race. Thus did Thor get back his hammer.

The main outlines of this story, a jest with a bloody ending, such as any village might have contrived and carried out, have lived on in the North in a popular ballad until modern times. Its theme is the outwitted

giant. The explanation of the masquerade as the symbol of some natural phenomenon is involved in hopeless difficulties.

3. Skrymir and Utgarðaloki.

Odin once mocked at Thor for having been so timid and frightened when he crept into the glove and did not dare to sneeze. In the so-called Younger Edda the story thus alluded to is related in detail. Once again on a journey to the land of the giants Thor entered with Thjálfi, Røskva, and Loki into a thick forest. About midnight there was a great earthquake, and the travellers took refuge in a house. At dawn Thor left the house, and found an enormous man asleep and snoring mightily. When the man awoke he gave his name as Skrymir (*i.e.* merry-andrew, juggler). To Thor he said, "I know that thou art *Asaþórr*, but tell me where hast thou put my glove?" Then Thor perceived that they had used the glove as their shelter for the night, and that he had taken refuge in the thumb. Skrymir offered to travel with them, and took food for them all in a bundle on his back. In the evening they rested under a great oak. The giant soon fell asleep, and as Thor could not undo the straps of the wallet, he had to go fasting. In his anger at this he struck Skrymir with his hammer on the forehead. The giant awoke, asking whether an oak leaf had fallen on his head. Twice again Thor's hammer struck him, but he did not feel it. Still on the morrow he left the travellers, prudently taking the wallet with him.

Thor, with his companions, then visited *Útgarðaloki*, a giant dwelling far away at the edge of the earth. Loki showed his skill in eating, Thjálfi in running, Thor in drinking. Thrice he raised the drinking horn to his lips

and found at the end that the liquor was only a little lower. Then a cat came running in. Thor put his hand under her body, but was only able to raise one of her feet from the ground. Finally, Thor wished to wrestle. Útgarðaloki gave him as his antagonist an old woman, his nurse Elli, and Thor was easily thrown by her. In the end it appeared that Útgarðaloki was no other than Skrymir himself, who had thus continued to make game of Thor. The end of the horn from which Thor had drunk lay out in the ocean; he had tried to drink the ocean dry. When you go to the seashore you will see how much he drank when the tide goes out. The cat was the Miðgarðs-serpent, which lies in the ocean and is coiled all round the earth; while the old woman with whom Thor struggled was old age. The man has not yet lived whom old age has not overcome. The Miðgarðs-serpent (O.N. *Miðgarðsormr* = world-serpent) symbolizes apparently the destructive power of the sea. It will swell mightily when, at the end of the world, the great deluge overwhelms the earth. This last danger, from which the dwellers on earth may not escape, could not be averted even by Thor, the divine benefactor of mankind. He met it with strength and courage, as is shown in the lay of Hymir.

4. Hymir.

The Aesir wished to hold a feast with Aegir, but lacked a brewing-pot. At last Tyr told them that, far in the east, at the end of heaven, there lived his father, the giant Hymir, in his ice-bound palace, and that he had a goodly pot. Thor journeyed with Tyr to the giant's dwelling, where they hid themselves under pots, having been warned of the giant's unfriendliness to strangers. It was late before the giant returned from hunting. The

ice-blocks groaned as he strode into the hall with frozen beard. Before his look the beams of the house burst asunder, so that the pots fell down; then Hymir saw Thor and the sight foreboded no good. For the meal he had three oxen slain, of which Thor alone ate two. The next morning Thor and Hymir went out fishing with an ox-head, which Thor had torn from one of the animals as bait. Thor rowed. Farther and farther he left the land behind. He fished with his ox-head for the snake that girds the earth. It took the bait. He boldly drew it with astounding strength to the edge of the ship and struck its hateful head with his hammer, so that the earth shook; yet the snake sank back into the sea—Hymir, horror-struck, had cut the line. They rowed home again, catching two whales, which Thor carried together with the ship up to the dwelling. Here he wished to give another proof of his strength by breaking a goblet. He struck rocks and pillars in pieces with it, but it still remained whole. Finally, he shattered it upon the giant's hard skull. Another time he was to carry a forged cauldron out of the house. Tyr could not move it from its place; but Thor took it by the rim and placed it upside down on his head, the ground gave way beneath him, and his heels knocked against the cauldron's rings. Thus he went his way. Hymir with his men pursued him, but Thor destroyed them all with his hammer and reached the assembly of the gods in safety with his cauldron. Since then the gods drink out of it at every flax harvest.

The tone of this lay is altogether different from that of the humorous scenes. We feel something of the terrible seriousness of this adventure in which the last great foe of man, when almost overcome, sinks sullenly back into its element by the help of the hostile giant. Thor will have to encounter the mysterious horrors of the deep

once more in his last great fight; in his wrath he will destroy them and perish in the act. This struggle of the days in which the world grows dark is foreshadowed in the episode of Hymir. It would be unjust to see in it merely the symbol of a natural phenomenon, as if Hymir denoted the bursting power of the frost and the brewing-pot the open sea, which the frost giant keeps shuts up through the winter under a covering of ice.

5. Geirröðr.

Even the terrors of hell were not feared by Thor. This we learn from a story, which hardly admits of other interpretation, dealing with the giant Geirröðr, a prince of the nether world with two gigantic daughters. Loki, hitherto known only as Thor's friend and companion, plays the part of traitor. He desires to hand over the strong god defenceless, without his hammer and belt of strength, into the hands of the giant Geirröðr.

On the way Thor visited a friendly giantess, Grið, who told him the truth and lent him her own iron gloves, her belt of strength, and her iron staff. Thus equipped Thor journeyed to the Vimur, the greatest of rivers. He girt on the belt and stayed himself against the current with the staff, but the water rose to his shoulders. At last Thor saw Gjálp, one of the giant's daughters, standing astride the river and causing the stream to swell; he therefore threw a stone at her. At last he succeeded in reaching the land with the help of a mountain ash. When he entered the giant's house he seated himself on a stool, and soon saw that it was being lifted towards the roof. He therefore pushed his staff up against the beams and thus pressed the stool down again. A great crash showed that the giant's two daughters had been underneath the stool, and that Thor had broken their necks. Geirröðr

himself was slain by Thor with a red-hot iron wedge, which the giant had hurled at him. The Icelander, Eilifr Gudrunarson, treated of this adventure in a poem (*Þórsdrápa*) written in Thor's honour, probably shortly after 976 A.D; Saxo Grammaticus also gives a version of it. In this latter the scenery of the nether world is clearly recognisable. The god's anger is directed against the foes of man on the earth, in the sea, and even beneath the earth. That the common adversaries of god and man were not to be found only among the giants may be seen from the following story.

6. The Dwarf Alvíss.

By his wife, Sif, Thor had a daughter, *Þrúþ*, whom he refused to give to the dwarf, *Alvíss*, although she had been betrothed to him in Thor's absence. The dwarf had his dwelling under the earth, and desired to carry his bride, the glorious maiden, to his underground home. Vingthor met him, and asserted that a white-nosed man was not born to have a bride. He alone had to decide the maiden's future. But at last Thor appeared to give his assent to the arrangement. He detained the dwarf with a series of questions until the morning dawned, and the dweller beneath the ground found himself in the sunshine of day. In this way the spirit of darkness was outwitted; he grew stiff and stark when struck by the beams of the sun.

An admirable interpretation is given by Uhland. The dwarf is the earth-spirit that dreads the light, pale visaged from the darkness of the earth. Thor's daughter, the scattered corn seed, seems to have been given up to him, and when in the spring Thor comes into the land, the seed is brought to the light again.

A lay is preserved containing this story, which to

some extent contradicts the conception of the god found elsewhere. Presumably it did not form a part of the old pagan tradition.

Tíw

The third of the three great gods of the people, called by Latin authors Mars, was worshipped in Germany under the name Ziu (or Saxnot). Among the tribes that had emigrated to England he bore the corresponding name of *Tíȝ* or *Tíw* (Eng. *Tuesday*, Ags. *Tíwesdæȝ*); the Scandinavians called him Týr. The Swabians, in particular, regarded him as their national god, and were his faithful worshippers; we find them called Ziumen. We still have in certain Upper German dialects, as in English, the god's name in the word Tuesday (*Zistag*). The Bavarians call the day Ertag; hence a further name for the god has been inferred, Eru, which has been connected with the Greek Ἄρης, whether rightly or wrongly cannot here be discussed. The Semnones, part of the tribe of the Suevi, worshipped their national god, as Tacitus relates, in an ancient sacred grove, and offered human sacrifices to him. The worshipper entered the grove in chains; if he fell he might not raise himself, but had to be rolled on the ground. It is very probable that the sacrificial feasts in honour of Tíw were the occasions of the sword dances by naked youths which Tacitus describes.

Tíw's symbol was the sword, as is also clear from his Saxon name of Saxnot (sword comrade, Ags. *Seaxnéat*). In the forms *Týr*, *Tíw*, *Ziu*, the name of the god is perhaps identical with the Latin *Jupiter*, Greek Ζεύς, Old Indian *Dyāus*,[1] which was similarly regarded by the Romans and Greeks as incomparably the highest and most majestic of names.

[1] See *ante*, p. 11.

The nation under arms is the people of Tíw, whether in time of peace when the tribes assembled in the national council (we know from Tacitus that they came armed), or in time of war when the able-bodied men marched in battle array to the field; in Tíw's name the priest blessed the host. We find clear traces of the worship of this god by other tribes besides those mentioned, viz. by Tencterei, Hermunduri, and Quadi, and a monument lately discovered in the north of England shows us this god as guardian of the Frisians when they gathered in their war camp. In 1883 there was brought to light a sculptured bas-relief and two Roman altars with inscriptions. The bas-relief, after the manner of Roman art, showed a Roman soldier armed with helmet, spear, and shield; on his right appears a goose, and at the sides two similar hovering figures with wreaths or palm branches, evidently Victories. The inscriptions show that both the altars were dedicated to *Mars Thingsus* by a company of soldiers from a Frisian colony, among whom were serving Teutons from what is now Twenthe in Holland. The armies of the Teutonic tribes were, we know, arranged according to their political divisions, each tribe forming in the order of battle a separate wedge-shaped column (Lat. *cuneus*, Teut. *þings*). On the inscription the guardian deity of the company is called Mars, by which is doubtless to be understood the Saxon Tíw and Scandinavian Týr. Whether the assembly of the people was one for civil affairs, or whether it formed the national levy, it was under the protection of Ziu, who was therefore gratefully worshipped. Otherwise we hear but little of him. As a proof of his daring, it is related that he placed his hand in the mouth of the wolf Fenrir, who, however, bit it off. In consequence he is one-handed. This legend is possibly the invention of a later time, and he is described as one-handed to signify his use of right and

left hand indifferently in battle. When accompanying Thor he appears as the son of the giant Hymir.

The impression is unavoidable that the cult of this most ancient divinity has for some unknown reason been concealed from us by the Scandinavians; otherwise the lack of information remains inexplicable. We shall see that the gods Heimdallr, Viðarr, and Hönir were originally identical with Týr.[1]

The Inferior Norse Gods.

The great gods Woden, Thunor, and Tíw were common to all the Teutonic tribes, but in Norse tradition a goodly number of subordinate deities was collected round them. Two groups are to be distinguished. The one clearly bears a resemblance to the heroes familiar to us from Greek mythology; the other includes Loki and the gods Viðarr, Hönir, Ullr, Heimdallr, whose probable identity we shall treat of later. Aegir forms a connecting link between the groups. These groups in their entirety can be traced only among the Scandinavians, while the first of them never attained divine honours even in Scandinavia; no temples were dedicated or sacrifices offered to these hero-like denizens of heaven. They were evidently heroic sons of men, rewarded with apotheosis by a thankful people; the belief that they had been divinely inspired led to their being regarded as the sons of the gods.

In the life of the missionary Ansgarius,[2] we are told that when he was in Sweden a man appeared claiming to have been with the gods, and to have returned with a message from them. Among other things this message made known that if the people were no longer contented

[1] See pp. 94 and 96. [2] See *ante*, p. 8.

with their old pagan gods and wished to increase their number, the gods were ready to receive the old tribal king Ericus among them, and to recognize him as a god. Immediately temples were built and sacrifices offered to him. Ericus is known to us as a Danish hero. The narrative, derived from a Christian source, confirms the view that among the Teutonic tribes the ranks of the gods were not closed to mortal men.

1. Baldr and Hǫðr.

"I saw doom hanging over Baldr, the bloody god, the son of Odin. A twig of mistletoe, tender and fair, grew high above the field; from the tree came the perilous arrow of pain. *Hǫðr* shot it. Baldr's avenger (Váli or Viðarr) was not slow to appear; when one night old he, the son of Odin and Rindr, began to fight. He washed not his hands nor combed his hair, until he had brought the slayer of Baldr to the funeral pile. But Frigg, Baldr's mother, wept over the woe of Valhalla." Such are the mysterious words of the Edda. They close by expressing the hope that Baldr will come again in a future better world, and, reconciled with his murderer Hǫðr, dwell in Odin's halls of victory, where the gods of battle will reign in glory. We may assume that this return was spoken of in the words which, according to the legend, Odin whispered in Baldr's ear when he was laid upon the funeral pile. On the other hand, the significance is not clear of the ring Draupnir, which Odin gave to his son to take into the lower world, and from which, according to the story, eight equally beautiful golden rings dropped every ninth night. Loki also boasted on one occasion that he alone was the cause of Baldr's no longer reigning in his home (called *Breiðablik*).

One of the most distinguished Icelanders of his time,

Olaf Pa, celebrated the marriage of his daughter between the years 980 and 990. The walls and ceiling of the hall were adorned with pictures representing scenes from the old pagan religion of his fathers. In one of the pictures of Baldr is seen how all the gods come riding to his funeral pyre. A strong giantess, Hyrrokin, sends the ship, which is to serve as the pyre, gliding slowly into the sea, where it is set on fire. Our detailed accounts of Baldr originated at a late period, long after the Scandinavians had been converted to Christianity, and they contain an admixture of quite foreign elements.

Baldr is the son of Odin, and the husband of Nanna. He is the best of all gods, every one praises him; he is beautiful as the whitest of all flowers, called *Baldrsbrá*. His judgment none can gainsay; in his dwelling there is nothing impure. Baldr once had an evil dream and told it to the gods, who took counsel how he might be protected against every kind of danger. With this object Frigg laid all things under oath that neither fire nor water, neither iron nor any other metal, neither bird nor snake should work harm to Baldr. Then for their pleasure they devised a sport. Baldr was to stand in the place of judgment and the other gods were to shoot and strike and throw at him. Nothing could do him hurt. This displeased Loki. He changed himself into a woman, went to Frigg and learnt that all things had taken the oath for Baldr except a twig of mistletoe (*Mistilteinn*) which had seemed to her too young. Loki fetched the mistletoe, and persuaded Hǫðr, who was blind, to throw the twig at Baldr, saying that he would help him do it. The dart flew straight and Baldr fell dead on the ground. "That was the greatest woe that ever befell gods and men," adds the story. The Aesir, filled with sorrow, were at their wits' end. Frigg proposed that some one should ride to hell and ransom Baldr. Hermóðr, one of Odin's sons,

undertook the journey. In the hall of hell he saw Baldr sitting in the place of honour, and Hel, the goddess of the dead, agreed to the return of Baldr, if all things in the world, living and dead, would weep for Baldr. Men and all other living beings, also the earth, stones, trees, and all metals wept for Baldr (as may be clearly seen "when things are brought out of the cold into the warmth"), but at last there was found a giantess who, when asked to weep for Baldr, answered that hell should keep what it had got. The giantess was Loki. Then Baldr was lost beyond recall.

It has recently been proved that many of the incidents of this narrative are of Christian origin. For instance, the deliverance of Baldr from hell is made to depend upon all creatures, living and dead, weeping for him. The sources of this feature of the story date from as late a period as the twelfth century, and are contained in a poem composed by Bjarni Kolbeinsson, who was consecrated bishop of Orkney in 1188. The old pagan lay only tells how the mother wept for the death of her son.

The saga as current in Denmark had an entirely different form, and is handed down by Saxo Grammaticus. The connection between the Icelandic and Danish versions is indubitable; the chief actors and their names are identical, as are also several prominent incidents. Saxo's narrative, however, is both more complete and more true to the original form of the story; the very names of Baldr and Nanna are those of heroes, and do not accord with the part assigned in Iceland to those who bear them. An old hero saga has in the Edda been changed into a saga of the gods. Neither Baldr, nor his wife Nanna, nor his foe Hǫðr were originally gods; they all once walked the earth.

Hǫðr, a youthful hero, renowned for his strength and

wisdom, wooed Nanna before Baldr, a son of Odin, had set his affections upon her. Baldr resolved to remove his dangerous rival by the sword. About this time Hǫðr, while hunting in a deep forest, came upon a group of Valkyries, who warned him against Baldr, and for his protection gave him a coat of mail which no sword could pierce. Gevarus, Nanna's father, approved of Hǫðr's suit, but feared the "half-god" Baldr, whom nothing could wound. He knew indeed of a sword, kept behind strong bars, which was strong enough to slay him. It was guarded by a forest spirit Miming. Hǫðr succeeded in getting it into his possession.

Baldr with his army invaded the land of Gevarus in order to fetch his bride. Nanna refused marriage with a god, and the battle began. On the side of Baldr fought Odin and Thor, but Hǫðr struck off the handle of Thor's hammer, and the victory was thus decided in favour of Hǫðr, who was armed in his charmed coat of mail. Baldr, however, was tormented in his dreams by visions of Nanna to such an extent that he began to grow thin and weak, but roused himself for a second conflict with Hǫðr. Hǫðr was obliged to flee, but on his flight again came to the Valkyries in the forest, who took pity on him and counselled him to procure for himself the food which caused Baldr's strength to be daily renewed. Again the two hosts were locked in battle until the night put an end to the fierce and doubtful fray. In the darkness Hǫðr went as a spy to the hostile camp, and on the way met three wise women who had brought Baldr the magic food and were just leaving the camp. Their footsteps left tracks in the dew. Hǫðr followed the women to their home and gained admittance on the plea of being a minstrel. There he saw three snakes, from the venom of which the magic food was made. But instead of receiving the food, as might have been expected, he was

given a strong belt of might, and on the way home it chanced that he met with Baldr. He thrust his sword into Baldr's side and left him lying half dead. The goddess of the dead appeared to the grievously wounded hero and foretold that the next day he would be resting in her arms. The prophecy came true. In Saxo's story, also, Baldr is finally avenged by the hand of his brother, whom the Danish tradition calls Bous.

The character and actions ascribed to Baldr in the Edda are altogether alien to the earlier version. They were early modified in the interests of Christian morality, and were thereby rendered totally unrecognizable. His name of itself shows him to have been the bold warrior who appears in Saxo and of whom we have stray traces in certain Icelandic lays. The confusion began with the word *Mistilteinn*. This was originally the name of the magic sword with which Hǫðr gave the death-blow to his foe. The word was afterwards by an error literally interpreted as the mistletoe, and round this mistake an accretion of foreign elements collected by a process no longer traceable.

Originally, then, the story was not a saga of the gods at all. Two famous heroes, deadly rivals in their love of the same maiden, are under the protection of the gods and of fate, by whom their lives are supernaturally controlled. Baldr is the greater favourite, described from the first as a demi-god (*semideus*) and as Odin's son. In the course of time, to judge from the traditions preserved, he developed into an independent deity, but we have no trustworthy evidence of religious worship having been paid to him. In the saga of Frithjof there is an unhistorical description of a temple of Baldr in the Norwegian district of Sygnafylki, and the mention of it leads to the introduction of several fables about the immaculate Baldr in the style of the late poetical mythology. The state-

ment that Baldr had by Nanna a son, *Forseti*, whom he left to gods and men to become the chosen champion of peace and justice, is perhaps equally unreliable. To judge by its name the island of Heligoland (called Fositesland about 700 A.D.) appears to have regarded Forseti with special reverence. Here the Anglo-Saxon, Willibrord, was driven ashore when on his missionary journey, and found a temple to this god, by whom we may suspect that Tyr is meant. Sacred flocks were pastured, which no man might touch; from a spring close by water might be drawn only in sacred silence. The transgression of these pagan regulations nearly cost the missionary his life.

2. Loki.

Viewed in a sinister aspect as the author of all woe among gods and men, father of gruesome monsters and destructive forces, yet radiant as Lucifer in his beauty, sometimes the faithful friend and comrade, sometimes the deceitful traitor and mocker—the god Loki is presented to us in unending variety. He is reckoned now among the Aesir, now among the giants, though originally, like Aegir, he seems to have belonged to the latter. In the beginning of time he solemnly mingled his blood with Odin's in token of blood-brotherhood, and because he had eaten of the heart of an evil woman he conceived and brought forth all monsters (*Fenrisulfr*, *Miðgarðsormr*, and *Hel*, the goddess of the dead); according to another version he spent eight winters beneath the earth as a woman milking cows; yet another tradition relates that the monsters were begotten by him and *Angrboða*. Amid the most various changes and transformations he remains true to his essential characteristic, the spirit of opposition. It was his fault that

one of Thor's goats fell and was hurt; he it was who gave Thjazi his death-wound;[1] who sent Baldr to hell and slew Fimafengr, Aegir's servant, in the hall, where a truce to all hostilities had been proclaimed.

Although he knew himself to be universally disliked, he yet thrust himself into the assembly of the gods when they came together to feast with Aegir (or, according to the apparently earlier account, to pass sentence on the slayer), with the evil intention of spoiling their pleasure. When he entered the hall the gods and goddesses all kept silence. But he appeared as a wanderer begging for a draught to quench his thirst. This Odin caused his son Viðarr to give him. Bragi's remonstrance aroused Loki's wrath, so that he showered the vilest abuse, not only on Bragi, but on all those present in turn, until he finally had to flee from Thor. He hid himself in the form of a salmon under a waterfall, but was caught and bound with the entrails of his son. Deep down in a fearful chasm beyond the inhabited world (Útgarðr)[2] he was supposed to be safely guarded. Poison trickles into his face, and when he shakes himself the earth quakes. Only with the destruction of the world will he regain his freedom. His wife Sigyn stays by him with unwavering faithfulness, and catches the drops of poison in a dish.

His father was Farbauti (or Fornjótr), who by his wife Laufey (or *Nál*) had, besides Loki, two sons, Byleifstr and Helblindi, of kindred nature. By Sigyn Loki had the sons Nari (or Narvi) and Váli (or Áli). He is even connected with the dwarfs, from whom he obtains golden hair for Sif, the spur Gungnir for Odin, and the magic ship *Skíðblaðnir* for Freyr. He himself has magic shoes with which he can fly through air and water (hence Loki's name, Loptr = air?), or he appears

[1] See p. 77. [2] Hence he is called Útgarðaloki.

robed in feathers like a bird, and performs his tricks by changing himself into a gnat.

Odin, Hönir, and Loki had once set out together on their travels. On the way they prepared an ox for their meal, but could not get it to boil properly. At last they heard an eagle call from an oak: "If you will give me as much of the ox as will satisfy me it will get cooked." The gods agreed, but Loki, angry at the size of the eagle's portion, thrust a shaft into its body. The bird soared into the air carrying the shaft with it and the god as well. After a long flight he was set free, after promising that he would bring Iðunn with her apples which kept the gods ever young, to the giant Thjazi, who had appeared to them in eagle form. Loki enticed Iðunn away from Asgard into a forest, and again the giant came as an eagle and seized her. Then the gods quickly grew old and grey, and demanded of Loki that he should bring Iðunn back. He flew as a falcon to the giant's house, found Iðunn alone, changed her into a nut, took her in his claws and flew off, pursued by Thjazi as an eagle. The gods lit a great fire round about their dwelling, into which the eagle flew, and thus they were able to kill him without difficulty. In this Loki showed especial zeal.

Another time the gods wished a giant builder to build them a stronghold in a year and a half. As wages he demanded the sun, the moon, and the goddess Freyja. The Aesir agreed, on condition that he should finish the building in a single winter, and the agreement should be void if the stronghold were not ready by the first day of summer. The giant worked with his horse *Svaðilfari*. There were still three days before summer began, and everything was ready except the castle gate. Then in the gods' hour of need Loki vowed that he would cheat the giant of his wage. In the form of a mare he galloped up to

the horse, the horse grew wild and ran after the mare, and the builder in pursuit. So the work was made to cease. Thor slew the giant, and Loki soon after begat a grey foal with eight feet; it was Odin's swift steed Sleipnir.

To none of the gods is Loki so constant a companion as to the old one-eyed Odin. We find the two closely associated from the beginning of time. Odin was in many ways connected with death and destruction, and this was even more clearly the case with Loki, who appears as the father of all the destructive powers of the sea and of the nether world. Originally Loki performed his many offices in the service of the gods. There is nowhere proof of any independent worship of him by sacrifice or ritual.

3. Aegir.

In Aegir's hall, where no unhallowed strife may come, the gods are guests and feast at every flax harvest from the brewing-pot Thor fetched for them.[1] Instead of the light of the fire they have the glitter of gold. This dwelling of Aegir apparently symbolizes the peacefulness of the ocean; the name Aegir of itself shows that water was the element of the god. In the gleam of the calm sea might be imagined the glitter of the gold buried beneath it.[2] To his wife *Rán* (*i.e.* robbery) belong the drowned, whom she draws with a net into the depths of the sea; her nine daughters call up the tempests. The father of Aegir is in one passage given as the giant Fornjotr, with whose name the wild elements are in general connected. We have already seen Thor in conflict with them. Possibly the enmity of the gods to the giants may have been the reason of Aegir's exclusion from the ranks

[1] See *ante*, p. 64.

[2] So L. Uhland.

of the Aesir. He is represented as a giant living on friendly terms with them.

At the feast, as described in one of the lays of the Edda (*Lokasenna*), the absence of *Þórr* is significant; *Óðinn* and *Sif*, *Bragi* and *Iðunn*, *Týr*, *Njǫrðr* and *Skaði*, *Freyr* and *Freyja*, *Gefjón* and *Heimdallr*, *Viðarr*, and afterwards even *Loki* are present. Aegir has two servants, Eldir and Fimafengr, of whom the latter is slain by Loki.

4. Viðarr.

This son of Odin comes before us only during and after the Twilight of the Gods. His attributes of bodily strength and silence give him a shadowy, mysterious character. He has his dwelling in *Viði* (*i.e.* in the forest), surrounded with tall grass and trees. He will appear when his father Odin falls, and avenge him by his irresistible might. In late tradition he wears, according to Christian precedent, an iron shoe on one foot. This iron shoe he sets upon the lower jaw of the monster that threatens the gods and the world, seizes its upper jaw in his hand and tears its mouth asunder. Thus when the great gods have fallen, their throne will be occupied by Viðarr.

This almost unknown god plays a special part in the story of Loki.[1] It is Viðarr who greets the sin-laden Loki in the hall of Aegir and bids him welcome. It is Viðarr who alone of all the gods assembled in Aegir's hall is spared Loki's bitter mockery. Viðarr appears beyond reproach. It was as though reverence for a higher power tamed Loki's evil tongue; Viðarr alone he felt compelled to treat with respect.

No trait of the strong young Teutonic heroes is

[1] See *ante*, p. 76.

more marked than their silence and dulness before their fighting days begin. Thus Viðarr is called "the silent god." I believe I am right in regarding Viðarr as another name for Heimdallr, who is likewise called "the most stupid of the gods." But if we identify these two we cannot accept a second representative of stupidity among the gods in the person of Hönir.[1] The conclusion cannot be avoided that Viðarr, Heimdallr, and Hönir are merely interchangeable names for one and the same great mysterious divinity. There was a legend having for its subject the change of this god's youthful dulness and silence into brilliant energy. It beseemed a hero well, says J. Grimm, that his childhood and early youth should be marred by such a failing, and that afterwards the glorious figure of the hero, the repressed vigour so to speak, should burst forth from this obscurity. I recognize this legend in the story of the youthful avenger of Baldr,[2] where he bears the name of Váli (*i.e.* fighter).

In the dark solitude of the forest the silent god watches over order and justice in the lives of gods and men. He is the guardian of peace, and as such the appointed judge of those who disturb it. According to ancient custom these are declared outlaws, driven from house and home, and handed over in the forest to the avenging hand of an invisible judge.

As the guardian of justice Viðarr or Hönir survives the catastrophe of the Twilight of the Gods.[3] When the crime has been atoned, he will assume the sovereignty in unimagined splendour, like the sun emerging from the clouds, and will then maintain for ever the laws of equal justice. A deep conviction permeated the pagan world, that so long as the present age endures injustice will reign on the earth and among the gods. Only one god lives

[1] See p. 84. [2] See *ante*, p. 70.

[3] See p. 98.

untouched by wrong; silent and aloof he dwells, far from all crime, the lord of righteousness. This dread divinity, of whom reverence forbids the poets to speak except in dark mysterious words, stands alone among the Teutonic gods as the representative of a profound conception of the sacredness of law. His temple among the Norwegians, as among the German tribe of the Semnones in the time of Tacitus, was the forest with its darkness and its awe. In him we recognise the *Deus Requalivahanus* (*i.e.* the god dwelling in darkness), of whom we have a fresh record in the votive altar found in 1883 near Cologne.

5. Ullr.

Ullr was akin to Baldr, and according to a late and untrustworthy tradition, was step-son to Thor, being Sif's son by a former marriage. He was unsurpassed in his skill as an archer and a runner on snow-shoes. His form is described to us as that of a proud and handsome warrior. It seems that Ullr was connected in the popular imagination with the practice of single combat, in which the champion, trusting in his strength and skill, may have called upon this god to grant him a favourable issue. It was an ancient form of oath to swear by a ring dedicated to Ullr. His dwelling was Ydalir. To judge from the meaning of the word, the idea was that of watery forest glades. The connection with his occupations of hunting and running on snow-shoes is evident. A similar conception of his character was current also in Denmark. Saxo Grammaticus relates this remarkable story. Ullr (Ollerus) once took Odin's place when the latter had been obliged to leave his throne on account of a disgraceful crime, and was therefore invested with the symbols of divine sovereignty. When the great god

returned, Ullr had to flee before him on his snow-shoes made of bones and consecrated with awful charms, but was killed in Sweden, adds the chronicler, merely to cover his own lack of information. Apart from the last statement we find Ullr on occasion spoken of in the Edda as the highest of the gods; his name itself has the meaning "splendid." In a variant to the above narrative, Saxo introduces *Mitoth-in* = *Mjǫtuþr* (the Judge), as exercising the office of punishing injustice; this office, we have seen, belonged to Viðarr and Hönir, and with them Ullr must be regarded as identical. Our imperfect sources do not admit of our giving more than this list of names.

6. Heimdallr.

It is improbable that this name is that of an independent deity. It is rather an appellation of one of the great gods, viz. of Tíw.

Heimdallr is gifted with the keenest senses. By day and by night he can see a hundred leagues, he can hear the grass growing on the ground and the wool on the sheep's back. He needs less sleep than a bird, and sits, more fitly than any other, as watchman of the gods on the edge of heaven. Born of nine giant sisters in the dim past where the sun sinks into the sea on the horizon, a solitary child, he was nourished with the strength of the earth, with the cool sea waves and with the blood of sacrifices. In riddles and stories such as these do the traditions speak of this strangest of all Scandinavian gods. He is called most often the white god with golden teeth, and dwells upon *Himinbjǫrg* (the highest height of heaven) by the bridge *Bifrǫst* (*i.e.* the rainbow) to keep watch and ward against the attacks of the giants. Hence he possesses, like Roland, a far-sounding horn. As he

apparently had his share of fighting (at the end of the world the story describes him as being slain in combat with Loki), he is assigned a horse *Gulltoppr* (= Goldtop), but his chief attribute was his sword. In this respect also he resembles Saxnot, who is identical with Tíw.

Quite a different description is given of him in the Edda lay (*Rígsþula*). In this version he wanders on the earth as Rígr (king), to found among men the classes of servants, freemen, nobles, and kings. The pleasure he takes in the life of the world may be alluded to in his name *Heimdallr* (= home-glad, glad in the world). The wise woman, into whose mouth is put the *Vǫluspá* lay, calls the different classes of men, rich and poor, his sons. This would accord excellently with the character of Mars Thingsus.[1] The distinguishing traits of Heimdallr are those of Tíw (= Týr), with whom he was identical in pagan times.

The Vanir.

Originally the gods lived in a golden age of peace. This departed for ever when the first war broke out among mankind. An ancient and obscure saga tells of a witch who disturbed by her baneful magic the careless life in the homes of men, and who was punished in the hall of the gods with awful tortures. Yet even the gods could not take her life. Gullveig, thrice burned with instruments of torture, thrice saved her charmed life. She belonged to a mighty race of beings, against whom war was declared in consequence of her deed, after terms of peace had been sought in vain. The first war in the world began when Odin, according to old Teutonic custom, hurled his spear into the hostile host of the Vanir. The Vanir pressed forward victoriously up to the

[1] See *ante*, p. 68.

strongholds of the Aesir, and forced on them a fateful peace. This peace was concluded by the following solemn rites. Both parties, Aesir and Vanir, spat into a vessel. From this a man was created, Kvásir by name, so wise and skilful that he knew the answer to every question. But while wandering on the earth to teach men his wisdom, he was slain by the dwarfs Fjalar and Galar. Furthermore, not only were the Vanir recognized by the Aesir as divine, but one of them, *Njǫrðr*, was even admitted into the ranks of the Aesir.

Njǫrðr was held as hostage, while in return the Vanir received Hönir from the Aesir. Of Hönir we are told that he became a mighty prince among the Vanir. In understanding he was somewhat weak, and when asked for counsel in the assembly always gave the same answer: "Let others advise." In consequence of this, Mimir, the source of wisdom among the Aesir, had to be sent with him—a fatal loss for the gods he left.

1. Njǫrðr.

Njǫrðr, evidently connected with the goddess Nerthus mentioned by Tacitus,[1] for the two names are identical and mean "benefactor," was among the Aesir the protector of sailors and fishermen. He lived by the sea, his house being called Nóatún (*i.e.* ship-place),[2] where he ruled the course of the winds, and calmed the sea and the fire. He was named together with Freyr in a form of oath, and is said to have had a large number of temples and places of sacrifice; prayer was made to him for riches, and for fixed and movable wealth, which it was in his power to bestow.

His wife *Skaði* is an inferior being, the daughter of the giant Thjazi mentioned above; Njǫrðr married her to

[1] *Germ.*, c. xl. [2] Cp. *Nehalennia*, p. 91.

atone for her father's death.[1] She was allowed to choose her husband from among the gods, but might only see their naked feet, while the rest of their bodies was concealed. She chose the one with the whitest feet, thinking it was Baldr. Her marriage with Njǫrðr was unhappy. The giant maiden did not like her home on the seashore, where the screeching of the sea-birds disturbed her; her delight was in the stormy snow-clad mountain solitudes, and there she spent the greater part of the year. In the mountains she hunted on snow-shoes with bow and arrow, greatly to the vexation of her discontented husband, who could not endure the howling of the wolves. Later accounts imply a connection between Odin and Skaði; at any rate Sämingr is given as their son. Sämingr was erroneously accounted the ancestor of the Norwegian royal house; his name points rather to Finnland, the home of snow-shoes. Hence we are tempted to regard Skaði, his mother, as a representative of Finland. The closeness of the relations between the Northern Teutons and the Finns can hardly be exaggerated. The Finnish deities—*Þorgerðr*, *Hǫrðabrúðr* (or *Hǫlgabrúðr*), and *Irpa*—can be proved to have been worshipped by various Scandinavians with great fervour.

2. Freyr.

Njǫrðr's son, Freyr, like his father, was recognized as one of the Aesir, and chose as his bride a giant maiden, *Gerðr*, brilliant as the sun, the fairest of maidens. His wooing is narrated in a charming Edda lay, the *Skirnismǫl*. Her father's name is Gýmir. When she walks about his dwelling the air and the sea shine with the glitter of her arms. Freyr sees her, and sends his servant Skirnir to ask her for him in marriage. On Freyr's horse, armed

[1] See *ante*, p. 77.

with Freyr's sword, Skirnir makes his way through the fiery wall (*Vafrlogi*) which surrounds the maiden's dwelling. But all offers and gifts avail nothing, until terrible curses and denunciations with the Gambantein (? magic staff) break down her opposition, and she promises to meet the son of Njǫrðr nine nights later in the forest Þarri.

After this we have to suppose that her home is Freyr's dwelling-place Alfheimr, where she rules with him over the Ljósálfar, the good spirits which hover above the fruitful earth. Wonderful treasures has Freyr: a horse *Blódighófi* (bloody hoof), a golden helmet with the crest of a wild boar *Gullinbursti* (with gold bristles), the usual ornament of the pagan Teutons' helmets, and the magic ship *Skíðblaðnir*, which can be folded up like a cloth; his sword he gave away, and since then he has been weaponless.

His worship centred in Iceland and Sweden; we hear frequently of sacrifice being made to him. To him, together with Thor and Odin, was dedicated the splendid temple in Upsala.[1] Accompanied by a priestess his image was borne on a car through the country as the means of insuring a fruitful year. With this accords the title elsewhere given him of lord over rain and sunshine. The similarity between Njǫrðr and the Nerthus of Tacitus is further shown by the Latin author's statement that, according to the reports of the East Teutons, the earth-goddess Nerthus was carried about on a cart drawn by oxen and accompanied by a priest. The worship of the Vanir must therefore have dated from a remote antiquity.

[1] See *ante*, pp. 8 and 24.

The Goddesses.

The Teutonic goddesses are strong, stern figures, fierce in battle, and sometimes full of terrors. Their beauty is never mentioned, but only their kindly care for the children of men, or their implacable, mysterious power, with which *e.g.* the goddess of the dead makes men's hearts quail before her.

FRIGG (in Germany Frija, among the Langobards Frea, in England Frige), whose name signifies "the Beloved" (Sansk. *prijâ*), is the wife of Odin, with whom she sits in Hliðskjálf, and knows all the fortunes of men, since Odin, her loving husband, tells her all secret things. At times she even dares to sport with him, as when, according to the Langobard legend, she brought his plans to nought by changing the position of his bed, so that her husband, waking in the morning, saw before him the long-bearded Winilis, and calling them Langobards, could not but give them the victory over the Vandals.

She is noted for her liberality, and distributes her gifts from a magic casket in the charge of her maid. The marriage-blessing is her gift, therefore barren women pray to her, and women in travail. As house-mother, the giver of wedded happiness, she is pictured with veil and spinning-wheel. The idea is the same when we are told of FREYJA that she carries the house-keys at her side, and the incompatibility of this domestic trait with the character of Freyja has long since led to the conviction of the original identity of these two goddesses, who were only developed into independent personages by the gradual growth of the legends relating to them. We still possess a vivid description of the dreadful part played by Frigg in magic rites, and of the greed with which she claimed her share of the corpses of the dead. Her power em-

braced the whole world. She reigned in the splendour of heaven, and punished with the terrors of hell. Besides her home, Hliðskjalf, she has a dwelling in Fensalir, in the depths of the earth, where the dead breathe the damp vapours rising from the rotting bogs. We shall therefore be right in regarding Frigg as the subject both of the traditions respecting Freyja (= German *Frau*, woman), and also to a certain extent of those relating to Hel (*i.e.* hell).

Freyja[1] is Freyr's sister, the daughter of Njorðr, and therefore classed among the Vanir (*Vanaðís*). When it is said that her home is in *Folkvangr* (folk-meadow), where innumerable dwellings stand ready for the dead who assemble there when they die, we could not have the realms of the dead more clearly placed before us. But like Frigg, Freyja is also the goddess of love. It was the custom to call upon her in affairs of love. She, too, was married. Her husband, *Oðr*, has long been recognized as Odin; she is said to have borne him a daughter, *Hnoss*. Freyja is accused of infidelity, just as Saxo Grammaticus tells of the faithlessness of Frigg to Odin.

Freyja (or, as we have seen, better Frigg) possessed a costly necklace, Brísingamen, the prototype of the swan-rings, whence she was called *Menglǫð* (necklace-glad). It was stolen from her by Loki, and brought back by Heimdallr. She is said to have acquired it by submitting to the will of each of the four dwarfs that made it. The necklace flies asunder when the goddess is moved to wrath, so terrible is she in her fury. She owns, moreover, a car drawn by two cats, and a rustling feathered robe, which she also lent to Loki. In her *valhamr*, as the Scandinavians called her feathered robe, she flies over the earth, evidently as chief of the Valkyries. Not only is she induced by Odin to stir up strife between two friendly kings, but he has also relinquished to her the half of those

[1] Possibly identical with Nerthus: Tacitus, *Germ.*, c. xl.

who should fall in the battle.[1] Yet she is not so far removed from human nature that she cannot weep; so Frigg weeps in Fensalir for Baldr.[2] Her tears are gold, says one of the finest passages. The noblest of the metals was regarded as the fruit of a mother's longing and a mother's grief.

The name FJǪRGYN carries us back into a dim and distant past. She is the mother of Thor. With her there appears also a male Fjǫrgynn, described by systematizing interpreters as her father We ought rather to regard him as her husband, who as Fjǫrgynn exactly answers to the Slav god Perkúnas. Originally the name bore reference to the grove of oaks, the dwelling-place sacred to the god and goddess. More generally the goddess is simply called *Jǫrð* (earth), and even this does not exhaust her titles. She was also invoked as *Hlóðyn* (*i.e.* kind friend); at least Viðarr is described as Hlóðyn's son, and an identical goddess, *dea Hludana*, is known to us from Latin inscriptions in Friesland and on the Lower Rhine.

The domain of Frigg, the universal goddess, is unlimited. She rules everywhere, assisted by a numerous train. The Valkyries have been already mentioned, but besides them we find numerous divine maidens of similar character who appear, in German tradition[3] also, as the companions and servants of Frigg or of Odin (Woden). Like the Valkyries, they are all unmarried, and like them they aid all those who gain their favour by sacrificial gifts. Such deliverers in need and danger are BEDA and FIMILA; their names appear on the altars already mentioned,[4] which were erected by Frisian soldiers in the Roman

[1] See *ante*, p. 55.

[2] This characteristic may have induced the Romans to identify her with Isis: Tacitus, *Germ.*, c. ix.

[3] In the Merseburg charm.

[4] See *ante*, p. 68.

service out of gratitude for a speedy deliverance from distress and danger. The Edda lays, also, tell of similar divine helpers whose names are generally connected with the ideas of protection and help. With SAGA (*Sága* = she who sees?) Odin in *Sǫkkvabekkr* every day drinks cool water from golden vessels. FULLA (O.H.G. VOL) wears her hair loose, a golden band on her forehead, and is Frigg's trusted friend; in German tradition she is Frigg's sister. Frigg's sovereignty over love is clearly alluded to in the names SJǪFN, LOFN, and VÁR. At the gate of the hall of the dead, SYN (O.H.G. SUNN) seems to have had her post, evidently as a fighting Valkyrie; so at least the name of her sister SINTHGUNTH would lead us to believe. HLÍN and SNOTRA seem to be personified attributes of Frigg, but GNÁ, Frigg's messenger, who owns a horse (*Hófhvarpnir*) on which she rides through the air and the sea, and EIR, the representative of the healing art of women, have a more individual existence.

To the same group certainly belongs IÐUNN, married to Bragi, but accused by Loki of the greatest infidelity, having even admitted her brother's murderer to her embraces. She keeps magic apples, of which the gods eat to preserve their eternal youth. The story has been already told how the giant Thjazi got possession of them, and the gods thereupon grew old and grey.[1]

The popular legends of Hulda (the Frau Holle of German folk-lore) and Berchta (translation of the Latin *epiphania*) are not to be found in ancient tradition. There is also no trace of a goddess Ostara. What we are told of the Anglo-Saxon goddesses Éostre and Rheda originated in learned deductions from the corresponding names of months.

We have, however, further testimony to the belief in

[1] See *ante*, p. 77.

goddesses in the Latin inscriptions found on Teutonic soil. On the island of Walcheren, at the mouth of the Scheldt, between the years 1647–1870, the waves of the North Sea washed out of the sand-dunes more than twenty memorial stones bearing the Latinized name of a German goddess, NEHALENNIA. This goddess appears conjoined with Neptune. On several altars she has her left foot resting on the sternpost of a ship, as in Greek representations of Poseidon steering a ship. The seafaring folk, who had so often to suffer from the tempests of the North Sea, worshipped in her the protectress of the ships and boats entrusted to the treacherous sea. This is proved alike by the pictorial representations of this goddess and by her name; Nehalennia is literally "the Seafarer" (*fem.*). As might be expected, traces of her are found among the Teutons of the Baltic, as well as those of the North Sea. Tacitus informs us of her worship by the great tribe of the Suevi, and his statement is valuable evidence of the diffusion from the Rhine to the Vistula of the worship of this same goddess. The conception of her character was so uniform that the existing representations of her in the east and in the west agree in their essential features, for among the Suevi also her symbol was a ship. The excavations on the island of Walcheren have further indubitably proved the existence there of a temple of Nehalennia. There is even evidence that this temple was still standing at the end of the seventh century, and that Willibrord destroyed it in the course of his missionary travels. Until that late period the German tribe had continued to worship in the venerable relic of Imperial Rome, and many a pious mother may have prayed in the temple for the helmsman and his ship, until the missionary laid the pagan shrine in ruins.

The World.

THE BEGINNING, THE END, AND THE NEW LIFE.

In the beginning of time lived Ymir. There was then neither earth, nor hell, nor heaven; Ginnunga gap (chaotic whirlpool) was everywhere, life there was none. The sons of Borr[1] raised the disc of the earth out of the water, and created the famous *Miðgarðr* (lit. mid-yard = the world). From the south the sun shone on the dry land, surrounded by the salt sea, and the ground grew green with plants. The sun, the companion of the moon, wandered about on the horizon like the midnight sun; the moon and stars did not know their places. Then the gods, the holy ones, established day and night and the seasons. Then they assembled on *Iðavǫllr* (Ida-field), built for themselves with golden tools temple-like dwellings, played with golden toys, and were merry and glad. But there came three giant maidens, strong above measure, from the land of the giants, called the Norns. And when the Norns came the golden age had reached its end, and the Aesir entered on a troubled life which began with the story of Gullveig and the first war.[2]

Ymir had been killed by the gods Odin, Vili, and Vé. From his blood they created water and the sea, from his flesh the earth, from his bones the mountains, from his skull the sky, from his brain the clouds, and from his eyebrows the hills. So runs a parallel tradition, in which the comparison of the world with the giant's body rouses our suspicions.

The race of dwarfs was created. Móðsognir and Durinn were the mightiest among them. The dwarfs made many forms of men in the interior of the earth. Two such human forms, made of wood, were found

[1] See *ante*, p. 34. [2] See *ante*, p. 83.

lying on the ground by the three gods Odin, Hönir, and Lóðurr (= Vili and Ve), who gave them life as the first human pair, Askr and Embla.[1]

Mythological tradition knows nothing of the creation of the world in the sense of the first chapter of Genesis. In the Scandinavian account the gods appear rather as the rulers than the creators of the world of nature. The life of the gods is not endless, on the contrary, it has a definite beginning and a definite end. The pagan Teutonic myth assumes the eternity of matter. The Teutonic gods did not create the world nor our planet, that existed before them and will exist when they are no more; they are rather the founders of Teutonic civilization. It is the gods who have made the dwelling-place of men habitable. To them man owes everything which raises him above the beasts; his spirit and soul with its impulses, his senses and faculties. We never hear of the creation of man, but only how he was developed; the old lay also says nothing of the creation of the animals, or of the heavenly bodies, but it speaks of their importance to human life. According to the Teutonic belief, the gods are not the beginning of creation, but the beginning of history.

Only at a much later period was a cosmogony developed by scholars; this is preserved in the so-called Younger Edda. According to it Ymir came into being from the drippings of the ice of the frozen rivers *Elivágar*. The mixture of the elements, especially the addition of the warmth of fire, is supposed to have produced the earliest creatures. The cow Auðhumla was made from melting ice; she licked Buri out of the salt rock; to Ymir were straightway born a man and woman; one foot begot with the other a six-headed giant, and so forth. In these

[1] See *ante*, p. 35.

strange stories we can only recognize oriental speculations which had spread in the wake of Christianity.

Of comparatively late origin was also the doctrine of the nine worlds (*heimir*); the original pagan division of the cosmos seems to have been only into three, *Ásgarðr*, *Miðgarðr*, and *Útgarðr*, *i.e.* the worlds of the gods, of men, and of the giants. The inhabited world of mankind was conceived as in the middle (O.N. *Miðgarðr*, Goth. *Midjungards*, Ags. *Middanzeard*, O.S. *Middilgard*, O.H.G. *Mittilgart*, *Mittingart*). On it rested the vault of the sky. Round it there lay the ocean, and in it a huge snake (*Miðgarðsormr* or *Jǫrmungandr*); far in the north-west, where the ocean reached the edge of the world, was the home of the giants (*Jǫtunheimr*). Over the whole world stretched the branches of the evergreen ash, the greatest of all trees, on which Odin had once hung as a sacrifice.[1] Hence the tree bore the name YGGDRASILL (*i.e.* gallows of Yggr = Odin). At its foot is a spring by which sit the NORNS. Their general name was *Urðr* (Ags. *wyrd*, O.S. *wurth*, O.H.G. *wurt*—*i.e.* power of fate); the names of the three sisters, *Urðr* (the past), *Verðandi* (the present), *Skuld* (the future), cannot be traced back to pagan times. They determine the fates of men by cutting rune staves[2] and casting lots. At the birth of a child they appear and place its fortune in its cradle. One of the sisters is envious and malicious, and loves to destroy the happiness which the others give. The scanty traces of the Norns have been partly absorbed into the belief in fays[3] introduced from Romance countries.

At the foot of the ash was the place of judgment, where the gods gathered together to arrange the affairs of the world, just as up to a late period popular assemblies were held under the shade of venerable trees. The three roots

[1] See *ante*, p. 35. [2] See *ante*, p. 29. [3] Lat. *fata*.

of the tree reached to the Aesir, the giants, and hell. On the tree sat an eagle, and between his eyes a hawk. A squirrel kept running up and down trying to breed wrath and discord between the eagle up above and a dragon below at the root of the tree. If the ash tree Yggdrasill was the same as the Læráðr in Valhalla,[1] the goat Heiðrún and the stag Eikþyrnir fed off its leaves. Every day the Norns drew water from their spring and poured it over the branches of the ash tree, from which dropped so much moisture that the dew and all the rivers came from it. It has not yet been determined how much of this description is to be ascribed to pagan antiquity, and how much of it is the result of later conscious embellishment. The idea of the eternally green tree with the spring at its foot is not peculiar to the Teutons; it formed a part of the Indo-Germanic religion in its original home.

Equally ancient and pagan is the conception of HELL as a place of punishment, which we find in Scandinavia. It lies under the third root of the ash tree northwards from the world of men and turned away from the sun; its name as a whole is *Niflheimr* (fog-world). When Odin rides to the dead, a hound covered with blood comes to meet him; and Hermóðr on his ride to hell passes for a long time through dark valleys until he comes to the frontier river *Gjǫll*. Across this leads a golden bridge, guarded by a maiden, *Móðguðr*. High gratings surround the hall (Eljúðnir), in which rules a monster, Hel, daughter of Loki (and Angrboða?). Dreadful rivers (*Hvergelmir*), through which the guilty have to wade, flow through the place of punishment itself (*Niflhel*). The punishments of hell, however, only fall on those who have secretly and of set purpose murdered others for the sake of gain, and on those who

[1] See *ante*, p. 52.

have knowingly foresworn themselves, and have been false to their plighted troth. According, therefore, to the pagan conception, a conception inherited from the primitive Indo-Germans, only those criminals are punished in a future life who had escaped punishment on earth.[1] In Niflhel is placed the dragon *Niðhǫggr*, who sucks the blood from corpses, and *Fenrisulfr*, the terrible wolf, who in the final battle is to vanquish the gods.

This final battle is the gods' constant dread. Since the first war broke out in the world, signs had been multiplied of the impending destruction of all that exists, even of the gods themselves; this destruction was the Twilight of the Gods (*ragnarökkr*, or, according to another reading, *ragnarǫk*, the judgment of the gods). Heimdallr's horn was hidden beneath the world-tree;[2] battle and war spread further and further, the Valkyries rode hither and thither over the earth fulfilling their bloody task, and Baldr fell a victim to secret guile. Loki was bound; Thor's struggle with the world-serpent had a doubtful issue; thus the future of the gods grew dark.

Then comes a terrible winter (*fimbulvetr*); the cock *Gullinkambi* (gold comb) crows and awakens the Einherjar in Valhalla; a dark-red cock crows in hell, and the hell-hound Garmr begins to bark. Evil times are coming; brothers will slay each other, none will spare his fellow-man; families will be broken up. Heimdallr brings forth his ancient long-hidden horn (*Gjallarhorn*), and blows a blast. The world is turned from its course; the world-tree quivers and groans; dwarfs wail before their rocky caves; the powers of evil, till now held in check, break loose and begin the war against the Aesir. A wolf devours the sun, another the moon; the bright stars fall from the sky. The earth trembles as the world-serpent

[1] So K. Müllenhoff. [2] What does this signify?

comes up out of the ocean and spreads over the earth. Fenrisulfr is loosed; the giant (?) Hrymr comes, with his shield advanced, from the east; Naglfar, the ship of the dead (said to be made from the nails of the departed), is launched; Loki leads on from the north the ice-giants and the troops of Hel; Surtr with the sons of Múspell, his flaming sword in hand, rides from the south over *Bifrǫst* with such force that the mountains reel, the sky parts, and the bridge breaks down. Odin fights in vain against Fenrisulfr, Thor against the world-serpent, Freyr against Surtr; everywhere on the great battlefield *Vígríðr* (or Oskopnir) the gods are worsted, though the sea-dragon is slain by Thor and the Fenris wolf by Viðarr. Water and fire rage,[1] the race of man vanishes from the earth; the earth itself sinks into the sea, as the poet says in describing a deluge resembling the Great Flood.

After this dissolution of all things, when the fire has gone out and the waters subsided, a new earth will appear. A new race of men will grow up, for Líf and Lifþrasir will survive the destruction of the earth, sheltered in the branches of Hoddmimir (*i.e.* the world-ash ?), and nourished with the morning dew. A new sun will shine, the daughter of the old one, and not less fair than her mother. Again the Aesir will gather on the Ida-field,[2] will find their golden playthings in the grass, and will talk of the great deeds of the age that is past. The happy, careless life will begin anew; unsown, the fields will bear their crops, everything will then grow better. Baldr will come again with Hǫðr; all enmities are at an end.

In a hall more brilliant than the sun, covered with gold (*Gimle*), shall dwell the faithful band, like a happy court, which only lacks its head. But he too, the highest

[1] This is Muspilli, the destruction of the earth; see *Althochdeutsche Litteratur* (Sammlung Göschen, No. 28 ii. 5).

[2] See *ante*, p. 92.

of all, whether he be called Tyr, or Heimdallr, or Hönir, or Viðarr, will come forth from his hiding-place[1] and rule in glory; he shall establish holy ordinances which shall endure for ever.[2] The corpse-devouring dragon will be for ever buried in hell.

[1] See *ante*, p. 80.

[2] K. Müllenhoff.

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